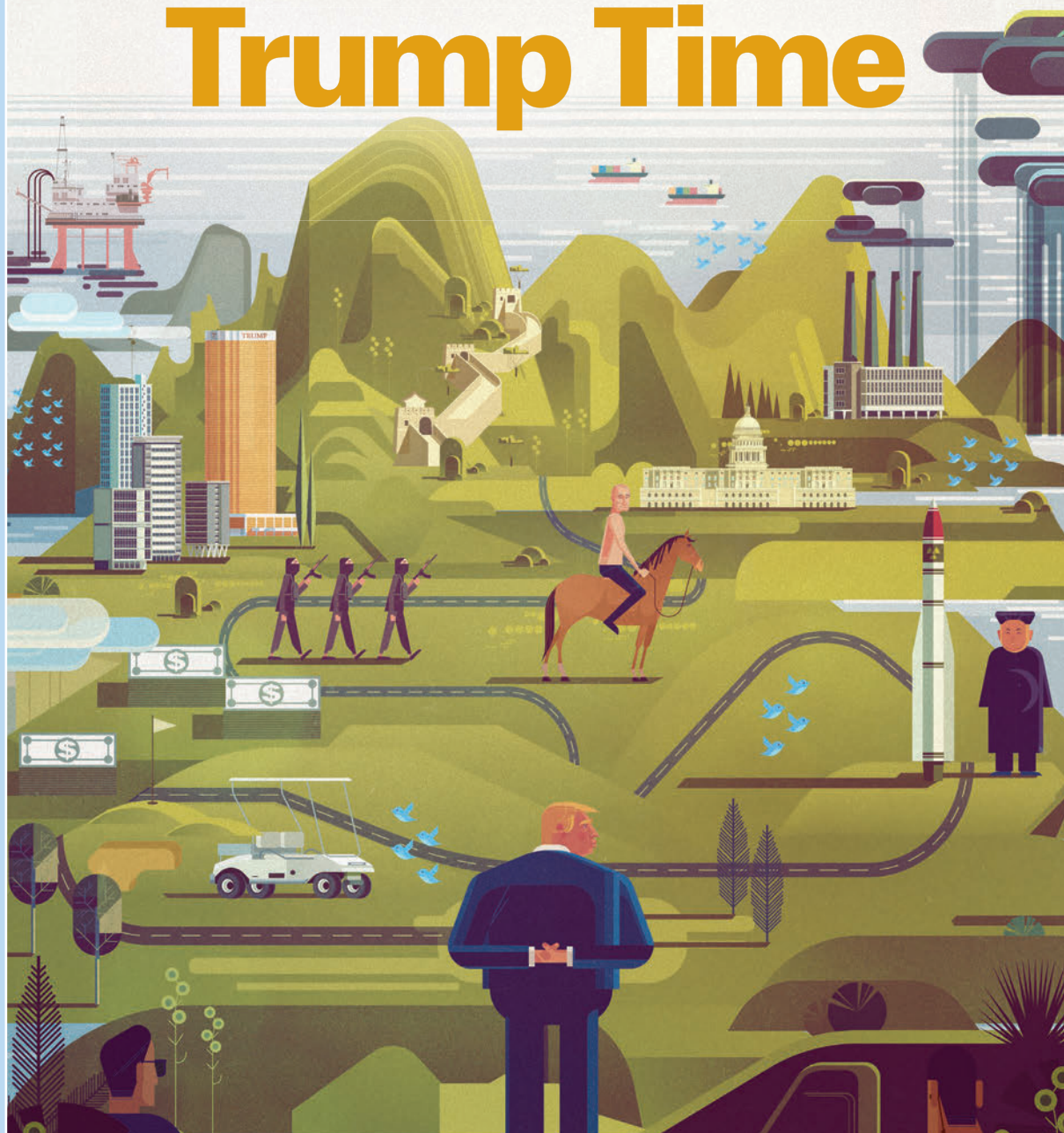


HOW AMERICA TURNED AGAINST EXPERTS

MARCH/APRIL 2017

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Trump Time





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# FOREIGN AFFAIRS



*Volume 96, Number 2*

## TRUMP TIME

**The Jacksonian Revolt** 2  
American Populism and the Liberal Order  
*Walter Russell Mead*

**Trump and the Economy** 8  
How to Jump-Start Growth  
*John Paulson*

**Trump and Russia** 12  
The Right Way to Manage Relations  
*Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss*

**Trump and China** 20  
Getting to Yes With Beijing  
*Susan Shirk*

**Trump and Terrorism** 28  
U.S. Strategy After ISIS  
*Hal Brands and Peter Feaver*

**Trump and the Holy Land** 37  
First, Do No Harm  
*Dana H. Allin and Steven N. Simon*



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---

<b>Trump and North Korea</b> Reviving the Art of the Deal <i>John Delury</i>	46
--	----

---

<b>Trump and World Order</b> The Return of Self-Help <i>Stewart M. Patrick</i>	52
--	----

---

## ESSAYS

---

<b>How America Lost Faith in Expertise</b> And Why That's a Giant Problem <i>Tom Nichols</i>	60
--	----

---

<b>Asia's Other Revisionist Power</b> Why U.S. Grand Strategy Unnerves China <i>Jennifer Lind</i>	74
---	----

---

<b>China's Great Awakening</b> How the People's Republic Got Religion <i>Ian Johnson</i>	83
--	----

---

<b>How to Hunt a Lone Wolf</b> Countering Terrorists Who Act on Their Own <i>Daniel Byman</i>	96
---	----

---

<b>The Dignity Deficit</b> Reclaiming Americans' Sense of Purpose <i>Arthur C. Brooks</i>	106
---	-----

---

## ON FOREIGNAFFAIRS.COM

► **Dmitri Trenin** on  
Russia's changing  
relationship with Europe.

► **Andrea Kendall-Taylor**  
and **Erica Frantz** on how  
democracies crumble.

► **Jennifer Harris** on  
what to expect from Rex  
Tillerson.

# ASIAN VIEWS ON AMERICA'S ROLE IN ASIA

## The Future of the Rebalance

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U.S. PRESIDENT ON FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ASIA**

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---

<b>The Prisoner Dilemma</b>	118
<b>Ending America's Incarceration Epidemic</b>	
<i>Holly Harris</i>	

---

<b>High Stakes</b>	130
<b>The Future of U.S. Drug Policy</b>	
<i>Mark A. R. Kleiman</i>	

---

<b>An Internet Whole and Free</b>	140
<b>Why Washington Was Right to Give Up Control</b>	
<i>Kal Raustiala</i>	

---

## REVIEWS & RESPONSES

<b>Destination: Europe</b>	150
<b>Managing the Migrant Crisis</b>	
<i>Elizabeth Collett</i>	

---

<b>The Renminbi Goes Global</b>	157
<b>The Meaning of China's Money</b>	
<i>Barry Eichengreen</i>	

---

<b>O Brotherhood, Where Art Thou?</b>	164
<b>Debating Sisi's Strategy</b>	
<i>Ahmed Abu Zeid; Steven A. Cook</i>	

---

<b>Recent Books</b>	167
---------------------	-----

---

---

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Archibald Cary Coolidge, Founding Editor  
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**SUSAN SHIRK** first visited China in 1971 as part of a group of graduate students opposing the Vietnam War. Since then, she has become one of the world's top experts on U.S.-Chinese relations. In 1993, she founded the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue, a forum for officials and academics, which she continues to lead, and under U.S. President Bill Clinton, she served as deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. In "Trump and China" (page 20), Shirk, now a professor at the University of California, San Diego, argues that the United States should retain its position on Taiwan but stand up to Chinese aggression.



In more than 25 years in academia and government, **TOM NICHOLS** has observed Americans' declining trust in professionals firsthand. After working as an aide in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and then the U.S. Senate, he taught international relations and Russian affairs at Georgetown University, Dartmouth College, and Harvard Extension School—along the way managing to become a five-time *Jeopardy!* champion. Now a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, in "How America Lost Faith in Expertise" (page 60), he makes the case for professionalism.



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## TRUMP TIME

**A**fter the most unusual election in modern U.S. history came the most unusual transition, to be followed, surely, by the most unusual presidency. As David Bowie might say, it is time to turn and face the strange.

Global elites need to recognize that the masses that they spit on, as they try to change their worlds, are immune to their consultations—they're quite aware what they're going through. Walter Russell Mead's article in our lead package traces the Jacksonian revolt that powered Donald Trump's stunning victory, focusing in particular on his voters' defense of a community they perceived to be under attack from above and below. Arthur Brooks' lament for Americans' lost sense of dignity later in the issue adds another side to the same story.

Bubble-wrapped cosmopolitans clearly need to broaden their perspectives and engage the full reality of their fellow citizens' lives. But so, too, do angry populists—especially those who ascend to political power. It's one thing to score points by bashing the establishment during the heat of a campaign; it's another to do so once you are in charge of that same establishment and responsible for shaping the fates of hundreds of millions of people at home and billions abroad.

Trump's statements on policy during the campaign varied dramatically from month to month, sometimes hour to hour—when they were specific enough to be understood as actual proposals. His cabinet picks have confused the

picture further, often espousing positions different from those of Trump, one another, and Republicans in Congress. How all of this can be forged into a coherent and effective foreign policy is unclear, and the new administration's attempts to do so will be fascinating to watch.

Trump's central economic priority will be increasing the rate of growth, and the hedge fund manager John Paulson, an adviser to his campaign, explains how the administration will go about doing that. Other articles in the package explore the challenges the Trump team will face in its dealings with Russia, China, North Korea, the Middle East, and terrorism. Stewart Patrick, finally, notes the likely adverse consequences for international order should Trump stick to his most consistently expressed positions on pretty much all these issues.

As always, the authors of these and our other articles are worth listening to because they know what they're talking about. These days, few seem to care about such things, with the spirit of the age best captured by Brexit supporter Michael Gove's rebuke to critics that "people in this country have had enough of experts." Those appalled by Gove's Philistinism will appreciate Tom Nichols' essay elsewhere in the issue, which maps the spread of this intellectual epidemic.

*—Gideon Rose, Editor*





*Not since Franklin Roosevelt's  
administration has U.S.  
foreign policy witnessed  
debates this fundamental.*

*—Walter Russell Mead*

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**The Jacksonian Revolt**

*Walter Russell Mead*

2

---

**Trump and Terrorism**

*Hal Brands and Peter Feaver*

28

---

**Trump and the Economy**

*John Paulson*

8

---

**Trump and the Holy Land**

*Dana H. Allin and Steven N. Simon*

37

---

**Trump and Russia**

*Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and  
Andrew S. Weiss*

12

---

**Trump and North Korea**

*John Delury*

46

---

**Trump and China**

*Susan Shirk*

20

---

**Trump and World Order**

*Stewart M. Patrick*

52

# The Jacksonian Revolt

## American Populism and the Liberal Order

*Walter Russell Mead*

**F**or the first time in 70 years, the American people have elected a president who disparages the policies, ideas, and institutions at the heart of postwar U.S. foreign policy. No one knows how the foreign policy of the Trump administration will take shape, or how the new president's priorities and preferences will shift as he encounters the torrent of events and crises ahead. But not since Franklin Roosevelt's administration has U.S. foreign policy witnessed debates this fundamental.

Since World War II, U.S. grand strategy has been shaped by two major schools of thought, both focused on achieving a stable international system with the United States at the center. Hamiltonians believed that it was in the American interest for the United States to replace the United Kingdom as “the gyroscope of world order,” in the words of President Woodrow Wilson's adviser Edward House during World War I, putting the financial and security architecture in place for a reviving global economy after World War II—something that would both contain the Soviet

Union and advance U.S. interests. When the Soviet Union fell, Hamiltonians responded by doubling down on the creation of a global liberal order, understood primarily in economic terms.

Wilsonians, meanwhile, also believed that the creation of a global liberal order was a vital U.S. interest, but they conceived of it in terms of values rather than economics. Seeing corrupt and authoritarian regimes abroad as a leading cause of conflict and violence, Wilsonians sought peace through the promotion of human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law. In the later stages of the Cold War, one branch of this camp, liberal institutionalists, focused on the promotion of international institutions and ever-closer global integration, while another branch, neoconservatives, believed that a liberal agenda could best be advanced through Washington's unilateral efforts (or in voluntary conjunction with like-minded partners).

The disputes between and among these factions were intense and consequential, but they took place within a common commitment to a common project of global order. As that project came under increasing strain in recent decades, however, the unquestioned grip of the globalists on U.S. foreign policy thinking began to loosen. More nationalist, less globally minded voices began to be heard, and a public increasingly disenchanted with what it saw as the costly failures the global order-building project began to challenge what the foreign policy establishment was preaching. The Jeffersonian and Jacksonian schools of thought, prominent before World War II but out of favor during the heyday of the liberal order, have come back with a vengeance.

**WALTER RUSSELL MEAD** is James Clarke Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College and a Distinguished Scholar at the Hudson Institute. Follow him on Twitter @wrmead.



*My country, 'tis of me: at a Trump rally in Louisville, Kentucky, March 2016*

Jeffersonians, including today's so-called realists, argue that reducing the United States' global profile would reduce the costs and risks of foreign policy. They seek to define U.S. interests narrowly and advance them in the safest and most economical ways. Libertarians take this proposition to its limits and find allies among many on the left who oppose interventionism, want to cut military spending, and favor redeploying the government's efforts and resources at home. Both Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas seemed to think that they could surf the rising tide of Jeffersonian thinking during the Republican presidential primary. But Donald Trump sensed something that his political rivals failed to grasp: that the truly surging force in American politics wasn't Jeffersonian minimalism. It was Jacksonian populist nationalism.

#### **IDENTITY POLITICS BITE BACK**

The distinctively American populism Trump espouses is rooted in the thought and culture of the country's first populist president, Andrew Jackson. For Jacksonians—who formed the core of Trump's passionately supportive base—the United States is not a political entity created and defined by a set of intellectual propositions rooted in the Enlightenment and oriented toward the fulfillment of a universal mission. Rather, it is the nation-state of the American people, and its chief business lies at home. Jacksonians see American exceptionalism not as a function of the universal appeal of American ideas, or even as a function of a unique American vocation to transform the world, but rather as rooted in the country's singular commitment to the equality and dignity of individual American citizens. The



role of the U.S. government, Jacksonians believe, is to fulfill the country's destiny by looking after the physical security and economic well-being of the American people in their national home—and to do that while interfering as little as possible with the individual freedom that makes the country unique.

Jacksonian populism is only intermittently concerned with foreign policy, and indeed it is only intermittently engaged with politics more generally. It took a particular combination of forces and trends to mobilize it this election cycle, and most of those were domestically focused. In seeking to explain the Jacksonian surge, commentators have looked to factors such as wage stagnation, the loss of good jobs for unskilled workers, the hollowing out of civic life, a rise in drug use—conditions many associate with life in blighted inner cities that have spread across much of the country. But this is a partial and incomplete view. Identity and culture have historically played a major role in American politics, and 2016 was no exception. Jacksonian America felt itself to be under siege, with its values under attack and its future under threat. Trump—flawed as many Jacksonians themselves believed him to be—seemed the only candidate willing to help fight for its survival.

For Jacksonian America, certain events galvanize intense interest and political engagement, however brief. One of these is war; when an enemy attacks, Jacksonians spring to the country's defense. The most powerful driver of Jacksonian political engagement in domestic politics, similarly, is the perception that Jacksonians are being attacked by internal enemies, such as an elite cabal or immigrants

from different backgrounds. Jacksonians worry about the U.S. government being taken over by malevolent forces bent on transforming the United States' essential character. They are not obsessed with corruption, seeing it as an ineradicable part of politics. But they care deeply about what they see as perversion—when politicians try to use the government to oppress the people rather than protect them. And that is what many Jacksonians came to feel was happening in recent years, with powerful forces in the American elite, including the political establishments of both major parties, in cahoots against them.

Many Jacksonians came to believe that the American establishment was no longer reliably patriotic, with "patriotism" defined as an instinctive loyalty to the well-being and values of Jacksonian America. And they were not wholly wrong, by their lights. Many Americans with cosmopolitan sympathies see their main ethical imperative as working for the betterment of humanity in general. Jacksonians locate their moral community closer to home, in fellow citizens who share a common national bond. If the cosmopolitans see Jacksonians as backward and chauvinistic, Jacksonians return the favor by seeing the cosmopolitan elite as near treasonous—people who think it is morally questionable to put their own country, and its citizens, first.

Jacksonian distrust of elite patriotism has been increased by the country's selective embrace of identity politics in recent decades. The contemporary American scene is filled with civic, political, and academic movements celebrating various ethnic, racial, gender, and religious identities. Elites have gradually welcomed demands for cultural

recognition by African Americans, Hispanics, women, the LGBTQ community, Native Americans, Muslim Americans. Yet the situation is more complex for most Jacksonians, who don't see themselves as fitting neatly into any of those categories.

Whites who organize around their specific European ethnic roots can do so with little pushback; Italian Americans and Irish Americans, for example, have long and storied traditions in the parade of American identity groups. But increasingly, those older ethnic identities have faded, and there are taboos against claiming a generic European American or white identity. Many white Americans thus find themselves in a society that talks constantly about the importance of identity, that values ethnic authenticity, that offers economic benefits and social advantages based on identity—for everybody but them. For Americans of mixed European background or for the millions who think of themselves simply as American, there are few acceptable ways to celebrate or even connect with one's heritage.

There are many reasons for this, rooted in a complex process of intellectual reflection over U.S. history, but the reasons don't necessarily make intuitive sense to unemployed former factory workers and their families. The growing resistance among many white voters to what they call "political correctness" and a growing willingness to articulate their own sense of group identity can sometimes reflect racism, but they need not always do so. People constantly told that they are racist for thinking in positive terms about what they see as their identity, however, may decide that racist is what they are, and that they might as well make the best of it. The rise of the

so-called alt-right is at least partly rooted in this dynamic.

The emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement and the scattered, sometimes violent expressions of anti-police sentiment displayed in recent years compounded the Jacksonians' sense of cultural alienation, and again, not simply because of race. Jacksonians instinctively support the police, just as they instinctively support the military. Those on the frontlines protecting society sometimes make mistakes, in this view, but mistakes are inevitable in the heat of combat, or in the face of crime. It is unfair and even immoral, many Jacksonians believe, to ask soldiers or police officers to put their lives on the line and face great risks and stress, only to have their choices second-guessed by armchair critics. Protests that many Americans saw as a quest for justice, therefore, often struck Jacksonians as attacks on law enforcement and public order.

Gun control and immigration were two other issues that crystallized the perception among many voters that the political establishments of both parties had grown hostile to core national values. Non-Jacksonians often find it difficult to grasp the depth of the feelings these issues stir up and how proposals for gun control and immigration reform reinforce suspicions about elite control and cosmopolitanism.

The right to bear arms plays a unique and hallowed role in Jacksonian political culture, and many Jacksonians consider the Second Amendment to be the most important in the Constitution. These Americans see the right of revolution, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, as the last resort of a free people to defend themselves against tyranny—

and see that right as unenforceable without the possibility of bearing arms. They regard a family's right to protect itself without reliance on the state, meanwhile, as not just a hypothetical ideal but a potential practical necessity—and something that elites don't care about or even actively oppose. (Jacksonians have become increasingly concerned that Democrats and centrist Republicans will try to disarm them, which is one reason why mass shootings and subsequent calls for gun control spur spikes in gun sales, even as crime more generally has fallen.)

As for immigration, here, too, most non-Jacksonians misread the source and nature of Jacksonian concern. There has been much discussion about the impact of immigration on the wages of low-skilled workers and some talk about xenophobia and Islamophobia. But Jacksonians in 2016 saw immigration as part of a deliberate and conscious attempt to marginalize them in their own country. Hopeful talk among Democrats about an “emerging Democratic majority” based on a secular decline in the percentage of the voting population that is white was heard in Jacksonian America as support for a deliberate transformation of American demographics. When Jacksonians hear elites' strong support for high levels of immigration and their seeming lack of concern about illegal immigration, they do not immediately think of their pocket-books. They see an elite out to banish them from power—politically, culturally, demographically. The recent spate of dramatic random terrorist attacks, finally, fused the immigration and personal security issues into a single toxic whole.

In short, in November, many Americans voted their lack of confidence—not in a particular party but in the governing classes more generally and their associated global cosmopolitan ideology. Many Trump voters were less concerned with pushing a specific program than with stopping what appeared to be the inexorable movement of their country toward catastrophe.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

What all of this means for U.S. foreign policy remains to be seen. Many previous presidents have had to revise their ideas substantially after reaching the Oval Office; Trump may be no exception. Nor is it clear just what the results would be of trying to put his unorthodox policies into practice. (Jacksonians can become disappointed with failure and turn away from even former heroes they once embraced; this happened to President George W. Bush, and it could happen to Trump, too.)

At the moment, Jacksonians are skeptical about the United States' policy of global engagement and liberal order building—but more from a lack of trust in the people shaping foreign policy than from a desire for a specific alternative vision. They oppose recent trade agreements not because they understand the details and consequences of those extremely complex agreements' terms but because they have come to believe that the negotiators of those agreements did not necessarily have the United States' interests at heart. Most Jacksonians are not foreign policy experts and do not ever expect to become experts. For them, leadership is necessarily a matter of trust. If they believe in a leader or a political movement, they are prepared



to accept policies that seem counter-intuitive and difficult.

They no longer have such trust in the American establishment, and unless and until it can be restored, they will keep Washington on a short leash. To paraphrase what the neoconservative intellectual Irving Kristol wrote about Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1952, there is one thing that Jacksonians know about Trump—that he is unequivocally on their side. About their country's elites, they feel they know no such thing. And their concerns are not all illegitimate, for the United States' global order-building project is hardly flourishing.

Over the past quarter century, Western policymakers became infatuated with some dangerously oversimplified ideas. They believed capitalism had been tamed and would no longer generate economic, social, or political upheavals. They felt that illiberal ideologies and political emotions had been left in the historical dustbin and were believed only by “bitter” losers—people who “cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren't like them . . . as a way to explain their frustrations,” as Barack Obama famously put it in 2008. Time and the normal processes of history would solve the problem; constructing a liberal world order was simply a matter of working out the details.

Given such views, many recent developments—from the 9/11 attacks and the war on terrorism to the financial crisis to the recent surge of angry nationalist populism on both sides of the Atlantic—came as a rude surprise. It is increasingly clear that globalization and automation have helped break up the socioeconomic model that undergirded postwar prosperity and domestic

social peace, and that the next stage of capitalist development will challenge the very foundations of both the global liberal order and many of its national pillars.

In this new world disorder, the power of identity politics can no longer be denied. Western elites believed that in the twenty-first century, cosmopolitanism and globalism would triumph over atavism and tribal loyalties. They failed to understand the deep roots of identity politics in the human psyche and the necessity for those roots to find political expression in both foreign and domestic policy arenas. And they failed to understand that the very forces of economic and social development that cosmopolitanism and globalization fostered would generate turbulence and eventually resistance, as *Gemeinschaft* (community) fought back against the onrushing *Gesellschaft* (market society), in the classic terms sociologists favored a century ago.

The challenge for international politics in the days ahead is therefore less to complete the task of liberal world order building along conventional lines than to find a way to stop the liberal order's erosion and reground the global system on a more sustainable basis. International order needs to rest not just on elite consensus and balances of power and policy but also on the free choices of national communities—communities that need to feel protected from the outside world as much as they want to benefit from engaging with it. 🌐

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# Trump and the Economy

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## How to Jump-Start Growth

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*John Paulson*

**T**he central economic goal of Donald Trump's administration will be to boost U.S. economic growth. Steven Mnuchin, Trump's nominee for treasury secretary, has said that the administration's objective is to raise the rate of GDP growth to three to four percent, doubling the rate achieved over the last decade. This will be accomplished by establishing a globally competitive corporate tax rate, adopting a territorial corporate tax system, reducing excessive regulation, boosting domestic energy production, and introducing better trade policies.

The United States has the highest corporate tax rate of any country in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. At 35 percent, the U.S. rate far exceeds the rates of the United Kingdom (20 percent), Germany (16 percent), Canada (15 percent), Ireland (13 percent), and many other countries. This high rate discourages investment, and reducing it will encourage it. The Trump administration plans to lower the corporate rate to 15 percent, eliminating the disadvantage for U.S. companies, making the United States a more attractive destination for investment, and creating jobs for American workers.

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In addition to a high domestic corporate tax rate, the United States also imposes a 35 percent tax on repatriated foreign earnings (with a credit for any foreign taxes paid). This has led U.S. companies to locate their manufacturing operations abroad and to keep their foreign earnings abroad, as well, rather than bring them back to the United States. Few other countries have such a policy, and it is one reason why U.S. companies have parked an estimated \$2.5 trillion overseas.

This unfavorable tax structure, moreover, has caused many U.S. companies to behave oddly. Apple, for instance, borrows money in the United States, even though it has over \$200 billion in cash reserves abroad (kept there in order to avoid paying the taxes that repatriation would generate). The chip maker Qualcomm recently announced a \$39 billion acquisition of the Dutch company NXP Semiconductors—a move that will help it avoid paying billions in U.S. taxes, according to Americans for Tax Fairness. And scores of U.S. companies have actually “inverted,” turning themselves into nominally foreign companies so as to take advantage of such firms' ability to bring cash earned abroad into the United States tax free.

To reverse this trend and encourage U.S. companies to bring their foreign cash home for investment, Trump has proposed reducing the tax on repatriated earnings from 35 percent to ten percent. The move has broad support among Republicans in Congress, and some combination of a lower corporate tax rate and a lower tax on repatriated funds will likely be passed into law.

Another factor holding the U.S. economy back has been excessive



*Man with a plan: Trump at a Carrier plant in Indianapolis, December 2016*

regulation. Unnecessary regulation makes it harder for companies to succeed and results in increased costs, lower investment, and restricted growth. This has been especially true of the financial sector in recent years, as reactions to the financial crisis overshot the mark. Not all regulation is pernicious, of course. Higher capital requirements and the elimination of off-balance-sheet financing, for example, have helped strengthen the domestic and global financial systems. But many of the financial regulations in the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act have placed heavy burdens of compliance on companies and impeded lending.

The cost of complying with cumbersome new regulations has been staggering. For example, from 2011 to 2015 alone, the ten largest U.S. banks collectively paid \$52.5 billion in consulting and

advisory fees on compliance-related issues. In 2014, Citibank had 30,000 employees working on compliance and regulatory issues, up by 33 percent from three years earlier. In the same year, J.P. Morgan increased its risk-control staff by 33 percent, in addition to using thousands of outside consultants.

The obstacles to growth caused by excessive and poorly conceived regulation are part of the reason the current economic recovery has been so slow compared with its predecessors. Limitations on credit have put a damper on new home construction, consumer spending, and business investment.

The mortgage sector offers an example of the complexity, redundancies, and wastefulness of ill-considered government intervention. Regulators have been fighting one another about who



has authority over the area, with each regulator imposing its own layer of often conflicting regulations. The result has been an almost total halt in private mortgage securitizations, which have fallen by 99 percent from their 2005 peak of over \$1 trillion in annual issuance. This near freeze has deprived a huge segment of Americans of mortgage financing. Overregulation and the collapse of the private mortgage securitization market have restrained the recovery in new home construction—which helps explain why, although new home construction has risen from its recent lows, it is still far below its previous peak and below the average level of housing required.

To lead the effort to break up the regulatory clog, Trump has appointed two highly capable executives. Mnuchin is the former CEO of OneWest Bank, and Gary Cohn, Trump's choice to head the National Economic Council, is the former president of Goldman Sachs. Both have extensive knowledge of the negative effects that excessive regulation has on the availability of credit and on growth. And beyond finance, other sectors ripe for regulatory reform include health care, labor, and energy.

A competitive corporate tax structure and reduced regulation will lead to higher economic growth. There are scores of real-life examples that show the impact of tax and regulatory policies on growth, and some patterns are clear. Generally, countries with high tax rates and high regulation (such as France and Italy) achieve lower growth, while those with low tax rates and low regulation (such as Ireland) achieve higher growth.

With the second-lowest corporate tax rate in Europe and light regulation, Ireland has the highest growth rate in

the region and offers a model to follow. When asked why businesses invest there, executives point to the business-friendly environment. And even my own firm, after reviewing many other locations in Europe, chose to locate its offshore services operations in Dublin for the same reason.

## **BEYOND TAXES AND REGULATION**

The United States has abundant energy resources and the technology to exploit them in previously unimaginable ways. A barrage of regulations, however, have made it difficult to reap the full benefits of this situation. The Trump administration plans to lift restrictions and streamline the permitting process in order to facilitate growth in energy production and infrastructure.

A good example of such barriers to growth can be found in the slow rate of approval for export terminals for liquefied natural gas. American firms have developed technology that allows them to extract gas from previously unattainable sources at extremely low prices. Unless the gas is liquefied, however, it cannot be exported and remains trapped in the United States. The construction of liquefied natural gas export terminals would allow it to be sold abroad. This would encourage still more development at home, creating more jobs, reducing the trade deficit, and spurring growth. Unfortunately, such construction has been delayed and restricted because of the vast number of approvals required from agencies that include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Department of Energy, and many others.

A final component of the Trump administration's economic plan will be

the renegotiation of trade deals so as to protect and expand U.S. exports. Trump has said that he is not opposed to trade in general—in fact, he strongly favors it—but he does oppose unfair trade. And dealings with China are a good example of where improvements can be made.

In 2015, the United States imported \$482 billion worth of goods from China while exporting only \$116 billion, leading to a trade deficit of \$366 billion. Chinese firms have almost unrestricted access to U.S. markets, yet U.S. firms face severe restrictions and roadblocks when trying to do business in China. Putting the commercial relationship on more equal terms, as well as tightening up the enforcement of intellectual property laws, would help raise U.S. exports and significantly reduce the bilateral trade deficit.

Making the United States an attractive place for investment, supporting export industries, and improving terms of trade with foreign counterparts will go a long way toward improving the U.S. trade balance, boosting U.S. growth in the process.

Disregarding the media's gloom and doom, U.S. investors and businesses have responded more favorably to the incoming administration's economic plans than most expected, with the S&P 500 rising by more than seven percent between the election and the end of the year and financial services rallying 19 percent. In December, Ray Dalio, chair of the hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, said that Trump's pro-business outlook could help boost growth. And in January, Mark Fields, the CEO of the Ford Motor Company, announced that Ford would cancel a

\$1.6 billion project in Mexico and instead expand its operations in Michigan, citing "the more positive U.S. business environment" that he expected under Trump.

Competitive corporate taxes, easier repatriation of foreign earnings, a less burdensome regulatory environment, expanded domestic energy production, and trade deals that give U.S. companies a fair chance to compete—together these will create jobs, accelerate growth, and lead to a new era of American prosperity. 🌐

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# Trump and Russia

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## The Right Way to Manage Relations

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*Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss*

**R**elations between the United States and Russia are broken, and each side has a vastly different assessment of what went wrong. U.S. officials point to the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea and the bloody covert war Russian forces are waging in eastern Ukraine. They note the Kremlin's suppression of civil society at home, its reckless brandishing of nuclear weapons, and its military provocations toward U.S. allies and partners in Europe. They highlight Russia's military intervention in Syria aimed at propping up Bashar al-Assad's brutal dictatorship. And they call attention to an unprecedented attempt through a Kremlin-backed hacking and disinformation campaign to interfere with the U.S. presidential election last November.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his circle view things differently.

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This article draws from a longer study they undertook for a joint task force of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

In Ukraine, Moscow sees itself as merely pushing back against the relentless geopolitical expansion of the United States, NATO, and the EU. They point out that Washington and its allies have deployed troops right up to the Russian border. They claim that the United States has repeatedly intervened in Russian domestic politics and contend, falsely, that former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even incited antigovernment protests in Moscow in December 2011. And they maintain that the United States is meddling in Syria to overthrow a legitimate government, in just the latest example of its unilateral attempts to topple regimes it doesn't like.

The gap between these two narratives is dangerous. Not only do heightened tensions raise the risk of a military accident or confrontation in Europe and beyond; they are also largely a reflection of deeply entrenched resentments within the Russian national security establishment that are likely to persist well beyond the Putin era. The differences between the United States and Russia run deep, and they are not amenable to easy solutions.

The challenge facing the Trump administration is to skillfully manage, rather than permanently resolve, these tensions with Moscow. Trying to appease Putin, perhaps by making unilateral concessions, would only convince him that he is winning and encourage him to continue wrong-footing the United States and the West. But a more confrontational approach would risk generating a provocative and dangerous response from Russia. So Washington will need to chart a middle path. That means both seeking ways to cooperate with Moscow and pushing back against it without sleepwalking into a collision.

Of course, that advice presupposes a U.S. administration that views Russia the same way previous ones have: as a problematic yet important partner on discrete issues that also poses a significant national security threat. U.S. President Donald Trump, however, appears eager to jettison established bipartisan approaches to dealing with Moscow. As he wrote on Twitter in January, “Having a good relationship with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. Only ‘stupid’ people, or fools, would think that it is bad!” And for months, he mocked the U.S. intelligence community’s warnings about Russian cyberattacks aimed at interfering with the U.S. democratic process and repeatedly praised Putin’s leadership.

Such antics suggest that Trump may attempt an abrupt reconciliation with Russia that would dramatically reverse the policies of President Barack Obama. It is hard to overstate the lasting damage that such a move would do to the U.S. relationship with Europe, to the security of the continent, and to an already fraying international order.

### **PUTIN’S GAME**

Any consideration of U.S. policy toward Russia must start with a recognition of that country’s manifold weaknesses. The Russian economy may not be “in tatters,” as Obama once remarked, but the boom that allowed Putin, during his first two terms in office, to deliver steady increases in prosperity in exchange for political passivity is a distant memory. Absent major structural reforms, which Putin has refused to undertake for fear of losing control, the economy is doomed to “eternal stagnation,” as Ksenia Yudaeva, a senior Russian central bank official, put it last year.

Following Putin’s return to the presidency in 2012, the regime has retooled the sources of its legitimacy. It has fostered a fortress mentality, mobilizing the public to defend Russia against foreign adversaries and mounting an unrelenting search for Western-backed fifth columnists. The apparent spur-of-the-moment decision to annex Crimea transformed the Russian domestic political landscape overnight, propelling Putin to unprecedented levels of popularity. And in Syria, the Kremlin has capitalized on its intervention to highlight Russia’s return to global prominence.

Unfortunately, tighter economic constraints are not likely to dissuade Putin from engaging in future foreign policy adventures. The collapse of oil prices that began in 2014 hit the Russian economy hard, as did the sanctions the West applied in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine that same year. Yet Putin has shown little restraint in the international arena since. His defiant approach appears to have strong support from the Russian elite, which faithfully rallies to the cause of standing up to the United States and reasserting Russia’s great-power status.

Indeed, Russia has always been much more than a mere “regional power,” as Obama once dismissed it; the country figures prominently in important issues across the globe, from the Iran nuclear program to the security of the entire transatlantic community. That will not change. But even if one accepts that Russia is a declining power, history shows that such states can cause considerable damage on their way down. And if there is one thing that can be said for certain about Putin, it is that he is a skilled and opportunistic risk taker capable of forcing others to deal with him on his own terms.



The United States must also reckon with another fundamental characteristic of Russia's foreign policy: its desire for *de facto* control over its neighbors' security, economic, and political orientation. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have long considered this unacceptable. Yet it constitutes one of the Russian regime's core requirements for security.

Absent an abrupt change in these fundamental realities, it will be hard to significantly improve U.S. relations with Russia. The country's intervention in Ukraine has demolished much of the post-Cold War security order and, along with it, any semblance of trust on either side. And it would be irresponsible for Washington to turn a blind eye to the Kremlin's reliance on hacking, disinformation, and Cold War-style subversion in its efforts to undermine the United States' international reputation and to meddle in democratic processes in Europe and beyond. The best course of action is for the United States to stand firm when its vital interests are threatened, to expose and counter Moscow's penchant for irregular tactics, and to carefully manage the rivalry that lies at the heart of the bilateral relationship.

### **THE BIG PICTURE**

In recent years, Russia and the West have been heading toward something that looks a lot like a second Cold War. This confrontation may lack the geopolitical and ideological scope of the first, but it still carries a high risk of actual conflict. The close encounters that NATO aircraft and warships have had with Russian jets are no accident; they are part of a deliberate Kremlin strategy to intimidate Moscow's adversaries.

For now, the Kremlin is likely to try to downplay sources of tension, setting the stage for friendly initial encounters with the new U.S. president and his team. Assuming Moscow follows that course, Washington will have to proceed with caution as Putin, the consummate deal-maker, seeks to shape the terms of a new relationship. In negotiating those terms, the Trump administration should adhere to five overarching principles.

First, it must make clear that the United States' commitment to defend its NATO allies is absolute and unconditional. To do so, the United States should bolster deterrence through an ongoing series of defense improvements and increased military deployments on the alliance's eastern flank. It should also ramp up the pressure on fellow NATO members to spend more on defense.

Second, the United States needs to steadfastly uphold the principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe—both of which commit Moscow to recognize existing borders and the right of all countries to choose their own allies. It may be hard to imagine a feasible scenario for returning Crimea to Ukraine, but the annexation remains a flagrant violation of international law that no country should recognize or reward. That means keeping in place the U.S. and EU sanctions that ban transactions and economic cooperation with Russian-occupied Crimea.

Third, as Washington reengages with Moscow, it must not run roughshod over Russia's neighbors. Appeasing Russia on Ukraine or caving in to its demand for a sphere of influence in its neighborhood would set a terrible precedent and undermine U.S. standing in the world. The



*Ally or adversary? Putin delivering his New Year's address in Moscow, December 31, 2016*

inherent fragility of Russia's neighbors will create many openings for future Russian meddling, so the United States and its allies will need to remain vigilant and become more deeply engaged in such a complex region.

Fourth, Washington and its partners in the EU should commit themselves to supporting Ukrainian political and economic reform through skillful diplomacy and a generous flow of resources. It will probably take a generation or longer to turn this pivotal country into a prosperous, European-style state, not least because of Russia's undisguised desire for Ukraine's reformist experiment to fail. If Ukraine receives steady Western support based on clear and achievable conditions, its success will have a lasting positive impact on Russia's trajectory by demonstrating a viable

alternative to the Kremlin's top-down approach to governance.

Fifth, as the United States attempts to support democracy in Russia and other former Soviet states, it should make a sober-minded assessment of local demand for it and the best use of limited resources. Russia's democratic deficit will hinder better relations with the West for as long as it persists. The same problem will continue to complicate U.S. ties with many of Russia's neighbors. But too often, Washington has overestimated its ability to transform these societies into functioning democracies.

In applying these principles, the United States needs to remain mindful of the risks of overreaching. That will mean making sharp distinctions between what is essential, what is desirable, and what is realistic.

## **NEEDS AND WANTS**

Improved communication belongs in the first category. In response to Russia's moves in Ukraine, the Obama administration suspended most routine channels of communication and cooperation with the Russian government and encouraged U.S. allies to follow suit. As the crisis has dragged on, it has become harder to address differences, avoid misunderstandings, and identify points of cooperation in the absence of regular interactions at various levels. The Trump administration should entertain the possibility of resuming a wide-ranging dialogue, even though the Russians may well prove as unwilling to engage in a serious give-and-take as they did during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, or may choose to use the talks solely to score political points. But even if the Kremlin isn't ready to engage forthrightly, the Trump administration should put four essential priorities above all else in its early discussions with the Russian government.

First, the Trump administration should respond to Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election in ways that get the Russians' attention. As a parting shot, Obama imposed sanctions on Russian entities involved in the hacking and ejected 35 Russian diplomats from the United States. Yet much more needs to be done. A carefully calibrated covert response in cyberspace would send the message that the United States is prepared to pay back the Kremlin and its proxies for their unacceptable actions. Trump should also work to protect the large swaths of government and private-sector networks and infrastructure in the United States that remain highly vulnerable to cyberattacks. The lack of a

concerted response to Russia's meddling would send precisely the wrong signal, inviting further Kremlin exploits in France and Germany, which are holding their own elections this year. In the meantime, the U.S. government should explore whether it can work with major actors in the cyber-realm, such as China and Russia, to develop new rules of the road that might limit some of the most destabilizing kinds of offensive operations.

Second, the Trump administration should ensure that military-to-military channels are open and productive. Russia's provocations carry the very real risk of a military confrontation arising from a miscalculation. Washington should prioritize getting Russia to respect previously agreed-on codes of conduct for peacetime military operations, however difficult that might be. The situation is especially dangerous in the skies over Syria, where Russian pilots frequently flout a set of procedures agreed to in 2015 to avoid in-air collisions with U.S. and other jets.

Third, in Ukraine, Trump should focus on using diplomatic tools to de-escalate the military side of the conflict and breathe new life into the Minsk accords, a loose framework of security and political steps that both sides have refused to fully embrace. The existing package of U.S. and EU sanctions represents an important source of leverage over Moscow, and so it should not be reversed or scaled back in the absence of a major change in Russian behavior in Ukraine. At the same time, the United States and its EU allies must work to keep Ukraine on a reformist path by imposing strict conditions on future aid disbursements to encourage its government to fight high-level

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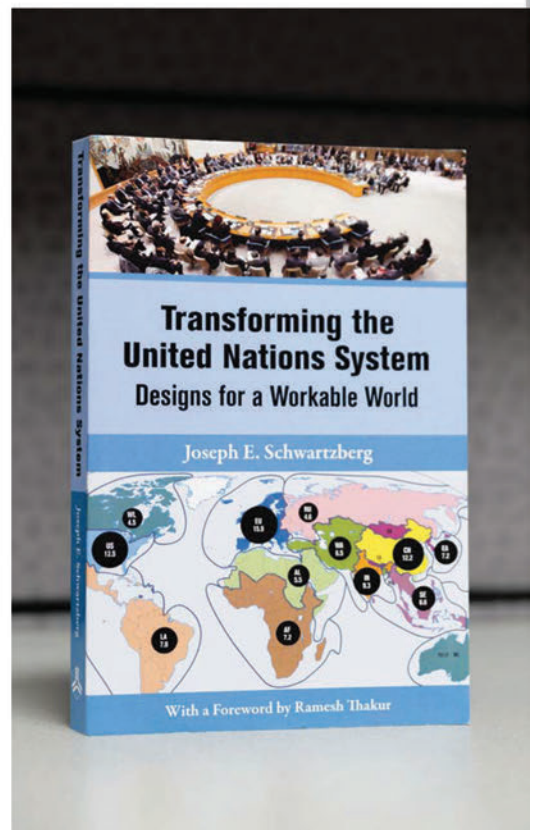
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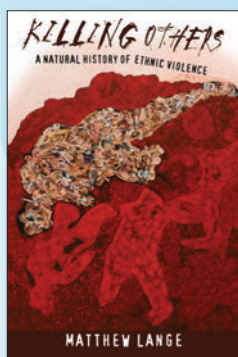
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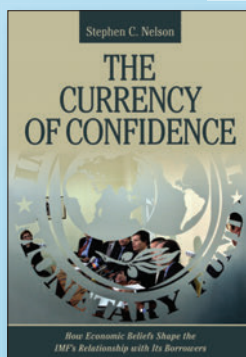
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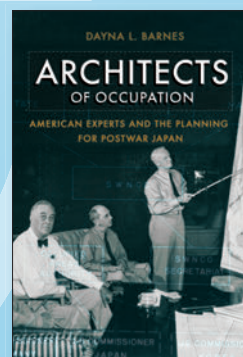
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corruption and respond to the needs of the Ukrainian people.

The fourth and final priority for the Trump administration is to remain realistic about the prospects of promoting transformational change in Russia. As the last 25 years have shown again and again, Russia resists outside efforts at modernization. In other words, the United States should not treat Russia as a project for political, social, or economic engineering.

Then there are goals that, although not essential, remain desirable. In this category should go issues on which Washington and Moscow have a good track record of cooperation thanks to overlapping, if not identical, interests. These include cooperation on preventing nuclear proliferation, reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, and protecting the fragile environment in the Arctic. Because these issues are largely technical in nature, they do not require the time and attention of senior officials. A great deal of progress can be made at lower levels.

On more ambitious arms control efforts, however, progress will require high-level decisions that neither side is eager to make. Such is the case with resolving the impasse over the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which the United States claims Russia has violated, and securing further reductions in the size of both countries' strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals.

Even so, the Trump administration should keep the door open to further progress on arms control. The U.S.-Russian arms control edifice is in danger of collapsing: the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe are no longer in force, the Intermediate-Range

Nuclear Forces Treaty may soon fall apart, and the New START treaty is due to expire in 2021. Neither Russia nor the United States is ready for a new arms control agreement, primarily because of conflicting agendas. Moscow wants to constrain U.S. deployments of missile defense systems and high-tech conventional weapons, while Washington wants to further reduce the number of Russian strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. But neither would be served by abandoning arms control completely. At a minimum, both would benefit from more conversations about their force structures and nuclear doctrines, with an eye toward ensuring stability, especially in crises.

#### **FACT AND FANTASY**

Of course, Washington's ability to achieve what is essential and what is desirable will be limited by what is realistic. In a perfect world, Trump would focus on keeping relations from deteriorating further. Instead, he and his team appear to be fanning expectations of a big breakthrough and a grand bargain.

Indeed, much of what Trump says he believes about Russia appears unrealistic, to put it mildly. For starters, he has made the mystifying choice to ridicule the U.S. intelligence community's finding that it was Russia that was behind the hacking of e-mails from the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. If Trump's and his advisers' statements are to be believed, even a brazen attempt originating at the highest levels of the Russian government to undermine Americans' confidence in their country's democratic process is less important than the poor cybersecurity practices of the Democratic

National Committee and Clinton's inner circle.

Trump appears to hold an equally unrealistic view of the Ukrainian crisis, saying of Putin during the campaign, "He's not going to go into Ukraine, all right?"—even as thousands of Russian troops were already there. When asked by *The New York Times* on the eve of the election about Putin's behavior in Ukraine and Syria and the ongoing crackdown against Putin's political opponents, Michael Flynn, Trump's pick for national security adviser, called these issues "besides the point." He added, "We can't do what we want to do unless we work with Russia, period."

But as Trump will likely discover, reality has a way of interfering with attempts to transform relations with Moscow. Every U.S. president from Bill Clinton on has entered office attempting to do precisely that, and each has seen his effort fail. Clinton's endeavor to ease tensions fell apart over NATO expansion, the Balkan wars, and Russian intervention in Chechnya; George W. Bush's collapsed after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war; and Obama's ran aground in Ukraine. Each administration encountered the same obstacles: Russia's transactional approach to foreign policy, its claim to a sphere of influence, its deep insecurities about a yawning power gap between it and the United States, and its opposition to what it saw as Western encroachment. Finding common ground on these issues will be difficult.

It appears that at the core of Trump's vision for improved relations is a coalition with Russia against the Islamic State—to, in his words, "knock the hell out of ISIS." Yet such cooperation is unlikely to materialize. The Russians have shown

no interest in beating back ISIS in Syria, choosing instead to attack the main opposition forces arrayed against the Assad regime. Russia's and Iran's support for Assad may have fundamentally changed the course of the civil war in Syria, but their crude methods and disregard for civilian casualties have probably only emboldened the radical jihadists. Help from the Russian military would be a mixed blessing, at best, for the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS, given the pervasive lack of trust on both sides and the very real risk that sensitive intelligence and targeting information would find its way into the hands of Moscow's allies in Damascus and Tehran.

Trump has also expressed interest in developing stronger economic ties with Russia as a foundation for improved diplomatic relations, at least according to the Kremlin's summary of Putin's congratulatory call to Trump after the election. Here, too, he is likely to be disappointed. Clinton, Bush, and Obama all placed high hopes on trade as an engine of better relations with Russia. All were frustrated by the fact that the two countries are, for the most part, not natural trading partners, to say nothing of the effects of Russia's crony capitalism, weak rule of law, and predatory investment climate.

## **PROCEED WITH CAUTION**

Trump inherited a ruptured U.S.-Russian relationship, the culmination of more than 25 years of alternating hopes and disappointments. As both a candidate and president-elect, he repeatedly called for a new approach. "Why not get along with Russia?" he has asked. The answer is that at the heart of the breakdown lie disagreements over issues that each

country views as fundamental to its interests. They cannot be easily overcome with the passage of time or a summit meeting or two. Thus, the challenge for the new administration is to manage this relationship skillfully and to keep it from getting worse.

Should Trump instead attempt to cozy up to Moscow, the most likely outcome would be that Putin would pocket Washington's unilateral concessions and pursue new adventures or make demands in other areas. The resulting damage to U.S. influence and credibility in Europe and beyond would prove considerable. Already, the rules-based international order that the United States has upheld since the end of World War II is in danger of unraveling, and there is mounting concern throughout Europe, Asia, and beyond that Trump does not consider it worth preserving. What's more, there's no telling how Trump will respond if and when he has his first showdown with Putin, although his behavior toward those who cross him suggests that things would not end well.

Reduced tensions with Russia would no doubt help further many of the United States' political and security priorities. But policymakers must keep in mind that the abiding goal should be to advance U.S. interests, support U.S. allies across the world, and uphold U.S. principles—not to improve relations with Russia for their own sake. Indeed, it's possible to stand up for American interests and principles while pursuing a less volatile relationship with Russia. The Nixon administration sowed mines in a harbor in North Vietnam, a Soviet ally, while seeking *détente* with Moscow. The Reagan administration aggressively

challenged Soviet-backed regimes and groups in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America at the same time as it signed arms control agreements with Moscow.

Likewise, the Trump administration can, for example, counter Russian aggression in Ukraine while looking for ways to cooperate on efforts to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the wrong hands. Such an approach has a far greater chance of success than pure confrontation or pure concession. Russian leaders have long expressed their preference for *realpolitik*; they will respect a country that stays true to its principles, knows its interests, and understands power. 🌐



# Trump and China

## Getting to Yes With Beijing

*Susan Shirk*

In recent years, China has started throwing its weight around. It has defied international law and risked violent clashes in the East China and South China Seas. It has bent trade rules by discriminating against foreign businesses to help its own. It has tried to shut out foreign influences while promoting its own propaganda abroad. And it has resisted Western demands that it put more pressure on its ally North Korea. China's new assertiveness stems, in part, from its growing power; the country now boasts the world's second-largest economy and its second-largest military budget. But domestic insecurities have also played a role. Slowing growth in an economy burdened by high levels of debt and accelerating capital flight have made Chinese President Xi Jinping increasingly anxious about internal threats, from popular protest to splits in the ruling Communist Party. In response, he has flexed the country's muscles abroad to play to nationalist fervor at home, while cracking down on any hint of domestic dissent.

China's ambition and insecure nationalism are here to stay, so long as unelected Communist Party leaders remain in power. The United States must figure out how to channel the

ambition in a positive direction while respecting China's nationalist pride and protecting the United States' own interests. Doing so does not mean Washington should abandon the prudent approach that has served it well since Richard Nixon was president. Both countries would lose if it provoked a trade war, an arms race, or a military confrontation. But the United States can and should stand up to China more often, by pushing back when Beijing violates international rules and harms U.S. interests. The aim of such responses should be not to contain China but to get it to act as a responsible stakeholder in the international system. The United States should welcome a more influential China, so long as it respects other countries' interests, contributes to the common good, and adheres to international laws and norms.

Getting the U.S.-Chinese relationship right will require deft negotiating by Washington. But the wrong way to start the negotiating process is to suggest, as Trump did before he took office, that the United States might reconsider its "one China" policy, under which Washington officially recognizes only the Chinese government in Beijing but has a robust unofficial relationship with Taiwan. Now that Trump is in the White House, he would do well to return to the long-standing U.S. approach. For the past four decades, the United States has engaged with China with cautious optimism, while relying on its network of alliances and partnerships in Asia to operate from a position of strength. Abandoning that strategy could have grave consequences: the end of Chinese cooperation on pressing global problems from climate change to nuclear prolifera-

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tion, harsh economic retaliation by China, or even military escalation.

### **CHINA WAKES UP**

China has experienced an extraordinary rise over the past three decades. By 2030, its economy will likely overtake the United States' as the world's largest, and its total global trade in goods already exceeds that of the United States. China has invested billions of dollars in infrastructure on every continent. And as the top trading partner of most Asian nations, it serves as the economic hub of an increasingly integrated Asian economy.

Yet the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) sees its grasp on power as surprisingly fragile. The country's leaders worry less about international threats than internal ones, especially during periods of economic weakness. In 2015, the economy grew more slowly than in any year since 1990. Local governments have taken on vast levels of debt, potentially setting the country up for a devastating crash if investors lose confidence in the value of the Chinese currency, causing a fire sale of locally owned property. Already, despite tightening capital controls, individuals and firms are finding ways to move ever-greater quantities of money out of the country.

Before the 2008 global financial crisis, many in the West believed that China's rise would prove peaceful. The country had enacted market-oriented economic reforms, opened itself up to foreign trade and investment, behaved in a friendly fashion toward its neighbors, and joined established international institutions. But China's rapid recovery from the crisis created a sense of Chinese triumph and Western weakness that led the government to promote

Chinese interests more aggressively than before and, in the process, undermine those of the United States.

Part of that effort has involved pursuing protectionist policies that discriminate against U.S. businesses. China has pressured foreign companies to transfer proprietary technology to Chinese firms as a condition of doing business in the country. It has stalled in its drive to reform the sprawling state-owned companies that Xi sees as the economic base of Communist Party rule. And it has taken other steps, such as disproportionately targeting foreign firms under competition regulations to give domestic industries an unfair advantage. No wonder American workers and corporate leaders increasingly feel that China is tilting the economic playing field in its favor.

Beijing has also enacted expansive new regulations preventing foreign individuals and organizations that it believes threaten the CCP's rule from operating inside the country. It has forced foreign charities, think tanks, and other nonprofit organizations to obtain official approval for their activities and given the police sweeping powers to monitor them or shut them down. Chinese authorities also increasingly deny visas to academics, writers, and journalists whose views they find politically objectionable. These restrictions, if they continue, will undermine the foundation of stable U.S.-Chinese relations: unfettered exchange between American and Chinese citizens.

It is in the realm of Asian regional security that China has externalized its ambitions and anxieties most significantly, by making assertive enforcement of its maritime claims its highest priority.

This fixation on sovereignty has trapped it and the United States in a rivalry that could easily turn violent. China claims a vast area of the South China Sea as its own, despite a ruling to the contrary by an international tribunal last year. Beijing declined to participate in the tribunal's hearings and opted instead to fan nationalist ardor by challenging the right of the U.S. Navy to operate in the disputed waters, constructing large artificial islands, building military installations, and harassing fishing boats from countries that also claim islands in the area.

Such assertiveness may have bolstered the CCP's popularity at home, but some in China worry that it has harmed the country's interests abroad. It has undercut relations with China's neighbors in Southeast Asia, put China in direct opposition to international law, sown doubts about its intentions, and introduced new tension into its relations with the United States.

### **LIVING TOGETHER**

As it attempts to deal with an internationally powerful but domestically anxious China, the United States should follow five overarching guidelines. First, Washington should maintain its network of alliances and partnerships in Asia. That network is crucial to influencing China's actions. Threatening to walk away from U.S. alliances with Japan and South Korea merely to get those countries to shoulder more of the cost of maintaining U.S. military forces in the region, as Trump has suggested, would seriously weaken the United States' position in Asia. Instead, Trump should consider visiting Japan and South Korea early in his presidency to reassure them that he

appreciates the value of their close ties with the United States. And he should find ways to reaffirm the same commitment to other allies in the region.

Second, Washington should push back against Chinese practices that directly harm the United States, even if that means raising tensions. It should focus on specific complaints, communicate clearly with Beijing, and use tools that allow it to dial the intensity up or down in response to changes in China's behavior. For example, it could enforce trade laws by imposing sanctions on particular industries, sanctions that it would lift if Beijing ended its discriminatory economic practices. By contrast, the kind of across-the-board punitive tariffs that Trump proposed on the campaign trail would only provoke China to retaliate even more harshly. Washington should reassure Chinese leaders that when they act with restraint and work to peacefully resolve disagreements, the United States is prepared to reciprocate.

Third, U.S. policymakers should keep in mind that China is not a unitary actor. They should design their words and actions to appeal to those groups in China, such as private businesses, that favor foreign trade and investment and a restrained foreign policy and to weaken those, such as the police, the CCP's propaganda department, and the military, that benefit from a tense relationship with the United States. For example, the United States should use State Department diplomats to convey its messages on the South China Sea instead of the tough-talking military officers it has used so far. And it should criticize new construction in the area by all countries, rather than continue to single out



*I am a rock: one of the disputed Spratly Islands, South China Sea, November 2016*

China. This would assuage China's anger at U.S. interference and elevate voices in China calling for the disputes to be shelved or resolved peacefully.

Fourth, to keep U.S.-Chinese relations running smoothly, U.S. officials at the highest levels should communicate regularly with their Chinese counterparts. Xi's centralization of power, his insistence that the CCP control all decisions, and his mistrust of the career diplomats in the Chinese Foreign Ministry are making effective communication with Chinese decision-makers harder for the United States than in the past. To remedy this problem, Trump and Xi should agree to each pick a trusted senior adviser to serve as his communication channel and should appoint high-level special representatives to work together on important issues, such as the North

Korean nuclear threat. An early meeting between Trump and Xi, ideally in an informal setting to allow for extended discussion, would help lay the groundwork for better communication in the future.

Finally, the United States should refrain from stoking antagonism toward China. A majority of the publics in both countries now view the other country negatively, making it hard for the two governments to compromise on high-profile issues. Leaders in both countries have made this problem worse. The CCP has attempted to persuade the Chinese public that the United States is bent on containing China's economic growth and international reach—a job made easier by the government's restrictions on information. In the United States, politicians and the media often frame the relationship



in zero-sum terms, creating the impression that mutual gains are impossible. To preserve their ability to negotiate, American and Chinese politicians should attempt to lead popular opinion toward a realistic but generous view of the other country.

### **INSIST ON RECIPROCITY**

These are the general principles that should guide U.S. policy toward China, but it's worth going into detail on how Trump should respond to three major areas of disagreement: China's discriminatory economic actions against U.S. companies, its growing assertiveness in regional waters, and its reluctance to put real pressure on North Korea about its nuclear program.

On economics, U.S. President Barack Obama took some steps in the right direction. On the eve of Xi's state visit to the United States in 2015, for example, the Obama administration threatened sanctions in retaliation for the theft of commercial secrets from U.S. companies by suspected Chinese government hackers. The threat worked: during his visit, Xi and Obama announced a joint pact not to support or conduct the digital theft of intellectual property or other commercial secrets. Later that year, to help enforce the agreement, Washington persuaded the G-20 nations to make the same commitment.

Getting China to moderate its conduct will not always prove so straightforward. In many instances, U.S. law limits Washington's options. For example, it prevents the government from treating Chinese companies operating in the United States differently from other foreign companies. Similarly, banning Chinese media in retaliation

for Chinese censorship of U.S. publications, such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, would violate U.S. laws guaranteeing free expression. What's more, restricting Chinese investment in U.S. companies would hurt the American workers they would otherwise employ. Nonetheless, Washington should find ways to respond to China's moves, even when doing so means paying a domestic price. When Beijing treats U.S. businesses unfairly; restricts the access of U.S. think tanks, university programs, citizens' groups, and media organizations; or withholds visas from U.S. journalists and academics, Washington should follow the well-respected diplomatic principle of reciprocity. Meanwhile, because Chinese firms are eager to invest in the United States, the U.S. government can demand reciprocal access for American firms that would otherwise face tight restrictions in China.

The best way to ensure that each country treats the other's companies fairly would be to complete the negotiations for the bilateral investment treaty that have been under way since 2008. If the United States went even further and resuscitated the Trans-Pacific Partnership—an admittedly unlikely prospect given Trump's opposition to the trade pact—it would give Chinese officials an incentive to reform China's internal markets in order for China to eventually join the pact itself.

At the same time as the United States holds the line on specific issues, U.S. officials should continue their largely successful efforts to integrate China into the global community. Washington errs when it opposes Chinese economic initiatives that other countries welcome, as the Obama administration did when it tried to stifle the nascent Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank. Instead, the United States should support initiatives that serve U.S. interests, even if they originate in Beijing.

### BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

When it comes to China's maritime claims, the Trump administration should take a firm position on the South China Sea based on international law. If the United States wants countries in Asia to see it as willing to stand up to Beijing when necessary, it cannot allow China to illegally interfere with U.S. ships in international waters. In December 2016, for example, a Chinese navy ship unlawfully seized a U.S. underwater drone collecting oceanographic data for anti-submarine operations off the coast of the Philippines, outside the area claimed by China. Washington protested, and Beijing returned the drone. But the Obama administration should have insisted that Beijing acknowledge that the Chinese captain made a mistake, and it should have announced that it was considering having armed ships accompany U.S. Navy research vessels from then on.

In spite of such incidents, the Trump administration should rely primarily on diplomacy and international law to manage the situation in the South China Sea. To demonstrate that legal principles, not an attempt to contain China, motivate its involvement, the United States should take an impartial stance on which countries own what. U.S. officials should criticize not just China but also Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam if any of them construct new facilities on the rocks and islands they presently control. The U.S. Navy should conduct freedom-of-navigation

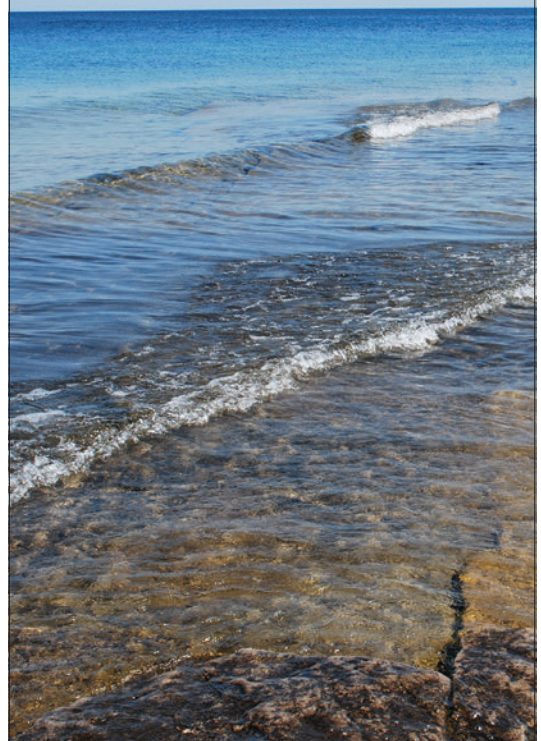
# Global Environmental Politics

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operations to establish its navigational rights under international law not just in international waters claimed by China but also in those claimed by other countries. To avoid escalating tensions, the Pentagon should conduct these operations quietly and routinely, as it does in other parts of the world, instead of publicizing them. Doing so would send the right message to China and other countries in the region without creating public pressure for them to respond aggressively. The United States should also keep an active military presence in the area to signal that it will respond strongly should China use force against the United States or its allies.

Washington should also publicly welcome Beijing's efforts to negotiate bilaterally with other claimants. And it should encourage China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, of which the other claimants are members, to stabilize the situation by agreeing to a code of conduct that includes a freeze on new construction and ways to jointly manage fishing resources. Finally, it must be said: the United States would strengthen its position as an advocate of international law if Congress finally ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the treaty that governs such cases.

### **BOMB DISPOSAL**

Dealing with the threat of North Korea's nuclear program will require a similar combination of diplomacy and strength. Trump should make clear to Xi that he will regard China's cooperation in getting North Korea to end its nuclear and missile development programs as a critical test of the U.S.-Chinese relationship. If Beijing wished, it could put massive

pressure on Pyongyang by restricting the country's trade, some 85 percent of which goes to or through China. So far, however, Chinese leaders have refused to do so. They worry that sanctions could destroy the North Korean regime, raising the prospect of a reunified Korea with U.S. forces on the Chinese border. To ease China's worries about a reunified Korea, Trump could reassure Xi that the United States would take China's security concerns on the peninsula seriously and refrain from placing its forces close to the border.

Beijing currently enables Pyongyang by allowing North Korean companies to operate inside China and failing to enforce international sanctions against coal and iron ore exports from North Korea. Trump should make it clear that if China continues this behavior, the United States will impose sanctions on Chinese banks and firms doing business with North Korea. Washington should also remind Beijing that if they were able to work together to reduce the North Korean threat, the United States might slow down its defensive military steps in the region, such as the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense antimissile system to South Korea.

Finally, getting China to help with the North Korean nuclear threat will require a third element: a serious effort to reach a deal with Pyongyang. Washington should propose negotiations modeled on the talks that led to the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement. Washington could offer Pyongyang a peace treaty, the normalization of diplomatic relations, and the sequential removal of sanctions in exchange for a freeze on North Korea's nuclear and missile development and

moves toward denuclearization. All these steps would require close coordination with South Korea. North Korea has long sown divisions between China, South Korea, and the United States, and when the three countries cannot overcome their differences, North Korea wins.

### **IF IT AIN'T BROKE**

As with other issues, it's hard to say exactly how Trump will handle relations with China. But even before he took office, he created a crisis. In December, he took a congratulatory phone call from Tsai Ing-wen, the president of Taiwan, making Trump the first U.S. president or president-elect to speak officially to his Taiwanese counterpart since the United States broke off official relations with the island in 1979. Later that month, he told Fox News, "I don't know why we have to be bound by a 'one China' policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade." If Trump pursues such a radical reversal of policy as president, it could destroy the existing foundation for peaceful relations and risk a furious response from China. Xi, fearful of looking weak to the Chinese public, would likely retaliate by imposing painful economic penalties on Taiwan and the United States and taking provocative military actions in the Taiwan Strait (which has been peaceful for more than a decade) or the South China Sea. What's more, treating China as an enemy would make it impossible for the two countries to work together on global problems such as climate change, epidemics, and nuclear proliferation.

Previous U.S. administrations did not get everything right when it came

to China, but rather than abandon their approach entirely, Trump should keep what has worked and change what has not. Most important, he should preserve the United States' position of strength in Asia. He should also avoid radical shifts in policy or confrontational rhetoric that could shake Beijing's confidence in Washington's peaceful intentions and make negotiations between the two countries impossible. But if China continues to assert its own perceived interests while paying little attention to U.S. concerns, the United States needs to push back. When China's leaders are tempted to pick fights with foreign countries to bolster their support at home—as Xi might be in the run-up to the CCP's midterm conclave at the end of 2017—they should look out to the Pacific, see a strong United States standing with its allies and partners, and think twice before acting. 🌐



# Trump and Terrorism

## U.S. Strategy After ISIS

*Hal Brands and Peter Feaver*

**T**he United States will soon reach a crossroads in its struggle against terrorism. The international coalition fighting the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) has driven the group out of much of the territory it once held and, sooner or later, will militarily defeat it by destroying its core in Iraq and Syria. But military victory over ISIS will not end the global war on terrorism that the United States has waged since 9/11. Some of ISIS' provinces may outlive its core. Remnants of the caliphate may morph into an insurgency. Al Qaeda and its affiliates will still pose a threat. Moreover, the conditions that breed jihadist organizations will likely persist across the greater Middle East. So the United States must decide what strategy to pursue in the next stage of the war on terrorism.

On the campaign trail, Donald Trump called for sweeping changes in U.S. counterterrorism strategy, promising to "defeat the ideology of radical Islamic terrorism." As president, he faces a

broad range of choices. At one extreme, Washington could abandon its military commitments in the greater Middle East on the assumption that it is U.S. interference that provokes terrorism in the first place. At the other, it could adopt a heavy-footprint surge strategy that would involve using overwhelming military force to destroy globally capable terrorist organizations and attempt to politically transform the societies that produce them. In between lie two options: one, a light-footprint approach akin to that taken by the Obama administration before ISIS' rise; the other, a more robust approach closer to Washington's response to ISIS since late 2014.

None of these four strategies is ideal. The extreme options—disengagement and surge—promise to dramatically reduce the threat. But both would likely fail in costly ways, and both are politically untenable today. The middle choices pose less risk and are more politically palatable. But they also promise far less and would likely leave the United States stuck in a protracted conflict.

Trump must therefore pick the best of a bad lot. Despite his campaign rhetoric, the least worst choice would be an approach close to the medium-footprint strategy being used to defeat ISIS today: an aggressive campaign encompassing air strikes, drone attacks, special operations raids, and small deployments of regular ground troops in response to specific threats, all in support of efforts by regional U.S. partners. This approach is imperfect, and it will not achieve decisive victory in a conflict that shows few signs of ending soon. But it is the most likely way of delivering an acceptable degree of security at an acceptable price.

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## **HOW TO FIGHT A HYDRA**

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has proved remarkably proficient at killing terrorists, frustrating their plans, and degrading their organizations. Yet no sooner has Washington finished off one group than a more dangerous one emerges. The United States gravely wounded al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2001–2 and the decade thereafter, only to be confronted by the rise of al Qaeda in Iraq, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and other potent affiliates of the group. The struggle against those organizations was superseded in turn when ISIS—the most virulent jihadist group yet—emerged on the scene. Even as the United States has repeatedly achieved operational successes, enduring victory in the war on terrorism has remained elusive.

This problem again looms large. As of late 2016, ISIS had lost control of key strongholds, such as Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq and Manbij and Jarabulus in Syria. Iraqi forces, supported by an international coalition, were fighting to retake Mosul, and U.S.-backed militia groups in Syria had begun operations to capture ISIS' capital, Raqqa. The U.S. Department of Defense has estimated that since August 2014, the coalition has killed over 45,000 ISIS fighters, and that ISIS' combat proficiency, organizational cohesion, and morale have fallen sharply. ISIS' defeat is now only a matter of time.

But the group's defeat will not end the war on terrorism. ISIS' provinces in countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Libya may survive. ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria may return to their insurgent roots. Al Shabab in Somalia, AQAP in Yemen, and Jabhat

al-Nusra in Syria are not going away either. Moreover, because much of the Middle East remains a fount of extremism, a successor to ISIS may arise in Iraq, Syria, or somewhere else. The United States will need a strategy for the next stage of its war on terrorism.

## **JUST DO NOTHING**

At one extreme, the United States could exploit the opportunity provided by ISIS' defeat to adopt a strategy favored by dovish critics: military disengagement from the greater Middle East. This option would represent a radical break from recent practice and a return to U.S. counterterrorism strategy of the 1990s and even before. That would mean dramatically reducing U.S. military presence in the greater Middle East, with no combat troops remaining beyond those needed to secure U.S. embassies. Washington might still conduct a small number of counterterrorism strikes, but these would be mostly retaliatory in nature, such as the strikes on al Qaeda bases ordered by U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1998 after the group bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Any preemptive attacks would be against only imminent threats, and only with drones or other long-distance, limited-liability methods of attack. Additionally, the United States would make no attempt to create counterterrorism partners from scratch, as it did in Afghanistan and Iraq, and would significantly reduce its existing military cooperation on counterterrorism with countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Disengagement would thus mean confronting terrorism primarily through nonmilitary means. At home, the United States would focus on intelligence and

law enforcement. Abroad, it would focus on sharing intelligence with other countries and securing diplomatic cooperation on counterterrorism. Disengagement might involve some limited development assistance to Middle Eastern countries, but U.S. policy would not aim to fundamentally remake them. Put simply, disengagement would take the United States off the war footing of the past 15 years.

The logic of disengagement is simple: U.S. military involvement in the Muslim world cannot fix the problem of terrorism; in fact, it exacerbates it by sowing anger at U.S. meddling. Pulling back could therefore minimize the terrorist threat. At the least, disengagement would remove a tempting target—the U.S. military—from the terrorists’ backyard and reduce the blowback that occurs when U.S. forces accidentally kill innocent people or act in other heavy-handed ways. It would also deprive extremists of crucial propaganda material: U.S. “occupation” of the Holy Land. More optimistically, it might redirect the anger of militant Islamists away from the United States and toward their own repressive governments and prevent more moderates from radicalizing. Whatever terrorist threat remained, the argument runs, could best be handled by learning to live with occasional small attacks rather than by overreacting to them. Disengagement would mean, its proponents claim, that the United States would save billions of dollars annually by conducting fewer operations and marginally reducing the size of its military.

Yet disengagement would also carry severe liabilities. It would grant extremists a powerful propaganda point: that the United States will flee, not fight, when

bloodied. Given Washington’s traditional role as the regional stabilizer, disengagement could also create a power vacuum in the Middle East, perhaps threatening states crucial to U.S. interests, such as Saudi Arabia.

Worst of all, disengagement would probably not actually reduce the terrorist threat. Although U.S. interventionism is one source of jihadist fury, there are others, including the United States’ liberal values and its nonmilitary support for repressive regimes, such as those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. And although inaction might mitigate anti-U.S. blowback, it would also prevent the United States from disrupting incipient dangers—as happened before 9/11, when U.S. officials failed to deal with the growing threat posed by al Qaeda. Disengagement, then, might not take the United States out of the terrorists’ bull’s-eye, but it would deprive it of the tools needed to keep the threat at bay. And if a less aggressive posture contributed to a mass-casualty attack, leaders who had gambled on disengagement would likely face political ruin.

Given these downsides, no U.S. president is likely to embrace disengagement. It is telling that the Obama administration, despite showing some sympathy for the logic of disengagement following Osama bin Laden’s death in 2011, ultimately concluded that the strategy was neither practical nor politically viable.

### **SOFTLY SOFTLY**

A post-ISIS strategy need not take U.S. counterterrorism all the way back to the 1990s. A second, light-footprint option would wind the clock back only to the period from 2011 to 2014, after bin Laden’s death but before ISIS emerged



*Special delivery: a peshmerga fighter near Mosul, Iraq, September 2014*

as a major force. The logic behind this strategy holds that the United States can reduce terrorism to a tolerable level by using limited military force to fight terrorist groups capable of major attacks. But it must not go too far, because outsiders cannot fix the deep-seated political problems within the Muslim world that cause terrorism. So the United States must avoid committing too many troops or resources; the risk of getting stuck in a quagmire is as great as the risk of terrorism itself.

In practice, this strategy would entail sustained, preemptive military efforts to weaken the most dangerous terrorist organizations, wherever they may be. Yet the United States would avoid even modest deployments of U.S. ground forces by limiting itself to drone strikes, aerial attacks, and

occasional raids by special operations forces. Where ground troops were needed to contain the most lethal terrorist organizations—AQAP, for instance, or al Shabab—Washington would rely on regional governments to provide them, assisting with long-distance strikes and logistical support. In all cases, regional partners would do the lion's share of the work. The light-footprint strategy would thus aim to manage, rather than defeat, what is considered a real but limited threat, and do so as cheaply as possible.

This approach would have its virtues. It would use the United States' unique military capabilities, such as the ability to conduct long-range strikes, to keep pressure on terrorist organizations without creating the blowback caused by larger military interventions. It would also avoid



stoking alarm at home, keeping a threat that kills far fewer Americans than gun violence or heart disease in perspective.

Not least, although a light-footprint strategy would cost more than disengagement, it would be cheaper than the more aggressive options. It could therefore free up resources to deal with other pressing problems, from climate change to resurgent great-power rivalry. Given these advantages, it is unsurprising that this approach appealed to the Obama administration after the end of the Iraq war and bin Laden's death.

As the Obama administration discovered, however, a light footprint is no panacea. For one thing, the strategy means relying on unsavory local actors who are wont to do morally appalling things. Nor does it even guarantee success. At best, it would involve enormous persistence merely to contain terrorist organizations and avert disaster; the Israeli government calls its version of the strategy "mowing the grass," evoking a Sisyphean task. At worst, local partners, without more U.S. support than this option entails, might fail to contain terrorist groups—something that has doomed the strategy in the past.

Between 2003 and 2011, for instance, Washington spent considerable time and money building up the Iraqi security forces as a counterterrorism partner—only to see them collapse after 2011, when the United States withdrew its troops from Iraq. This allowed ISIS to establish its quasi state, recruit foreign fighters, and direct and inspire attacks.

Something similar happened in Yemen. The light-footprint approach worked well for a time against AQAP—so well that in 2013 and 2014, the Obama administration touted it as a model for

counterterrorism. Yet by early 2015, the Yemeni state and armed forces were crumbling before an externally supported Houthi rebellion, taking down the U.S. counterterrorism mission in the process and allowing AQAP to expand its hold in the country.

The danger of a light-footprint approach, then, is that it may incur some of the costs of action but not do enough to keep the threat under control—and that when it fails, it will require the United States to intervene under less favorable circumstances than before, while also bringing down heavy criticism on the leaders responsible. This is exactly what happened to the Obama administration by 2014–15, causing it to shift to a more aggressive strategy.

### **THE GOLDBLOCKS STRATEGY**

The third—and probably best—option is a beefed-up version of the current strategy: call it "counter-ISIS plus." It would involve a larger U.S. military commitment than the first two but substantially less than a surge approach. At a minimum, the commitment would approximate that of the Obama administration's 2016 counter-ISIS campaign, which deployed roughly 5,000 U.S. troops to Iraq and Syria and included thousands more conducting air strikes or other supporting operations in the region. At a maximum, it would approach 20,000 military personnel, deployed to address specific threats from the strongest terrorist organizations and to train and assist regional forces. And crucially, this strategy would go beyond just deploying more troops than a light-footprint approach: it would also allow them to operate more assertively.

U.S. forces would still conduct drone strikes and other long-distance, limited-liability attacks, but these would form part of larger, more intensive air campaigns involving manned aircraft, forward air controllers, and a broader range of targets. Meanwhile, special operations forces would conduct a steady rhythm of raids to gather intelligence, kill or capture terrorist leaders, and disrupt terrorist organizations. And battalion-size U.S. forces would carry out combat operations on the ground, either independently or in support of regional partners. These might be similar to Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan in 2002, in which over 1,000 U.S. troops and 1,000 Afghan militia forces, supported by other coalition forces, engaged in a fierce battle against al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. Finally, U.S. troops would work with partner forces not just by training and equipping them but also by advising them and accompanying them into battle. These security force assistance missions would continue even after the main campaigns had ended to make sure partner forces remained effective.

Under this approach, the United States would still not attempt to transform Middle Eastern societies, although it would encourage local partners to make political and economic reforms to defang jihadist ideology, and it would use diplomacy and modest economic investments to incentivize those reforms. In the meantime, Washington would seek to militarily defeat, rather than merely contain, extremist organizations. And to do so, it would accept the risk of more American casualties.

This strategy rests on a diagnosis similar to that underlying the light-footprint approach: that the United

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States cannot cure the pathologies that cause terrorism and so will never eliminate the threat. Yet this approach is more pessimistic about the dangers of allowing extremist organizations to survive and more optimistic about the chances of militarily defeating them. The United States can achieve significant, if not permanent, military success against terrorists, the thinking goes, by destroying their organizations, killing their leaders and foot soldiers, and leaving them with no safe havens. Knock an opponent down hard enough, in other words, and it will take him a while to get back up.

Indeed, the main advantage of this strategy over less aggressive options is that it would pack a greater punch against terrorist networks while still avoiding large, costly, and politically toxic deployments. By combining a range of tools—airpower, advisers, special operations forces, intelligence, and diplomacy—the United States could destroy the most dangerous terrorist networks and prevent threats that are manageable today from turning into something far deadlier tomorrow. What's more, providing more robust support to partner forces would help maintain their effectiveness and give the United States greater leverage to moderate counterproductive behaviors such as human rights violations and sectarian abuse, which could help prevent blowback. For example, the local forces with which the United States has partnered to fight ISIS—the Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish *peshmerga* in Iraq and Arab and Kurdish groups in Syria—have performed better since the United States shifted to its current strategy in late 2014. The experience of the past

15 years suggests that this strategy can work against even fearsome opponents, whether al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2001–2 or ISIS today. Finally, by striking a balance between doing too much and doing too little, this option would mitigate the political risks of both more passive and more aggressive strategies.

Yet this strategy would also have downsides. It would involve deploying between 5,000 and 20,000 troops at any one time. Even limited deployments inevitably raise the chances of more American deaths than planners expect. It would also mean spending \$5–\$20 billion per year—not a prohibitive sum, but far more than more passive options would cost.

The greatest danger of such a campaign is that it might last indefinitely. Even in the best case, it would require a great deal of time to succeed—witness the glacial pace of the counter-ISIS campaign today. At worst, if terrorism is indeed rooted in the political pathologies of many Muslim societies, then military victories may not stay won unless those pathologies are cured—something that might take more energy and resources than this strategy would provide.

### SWING A BIG STICK

This point leads to the final option, a surge strategy. This would entail a large, medium- to long-term military deployment similar in size to the surge of 150,000–200,000 troops that the George W. Bush administration committed to the Iraq war in 2007–8, along with proportional economic, diplomatic, and intelligence resources. The United States would aim not only to destroy the most dangerous terrorist organizations wherever they emerged

but also to remake the political complexion of the greater Middle East.

Like the second and third options, this strategy rests on the theory that Middle Eastern terrorism flows from political illiberalism in the Muslim world. But it assumes that the United States must cure the disease, not merely treat its symptoms. Failing to do so, the argument goes, would ensure that new terrorist groups would arise as old ones were defeated. In a world of imperfect intelligence, allowing new threats to survive risks exposing Americans to a catastrophic attack.

This diagnosis suggests a two-step response. First, destroy any terrorist organization capable of global reach, using whatever means necessary, including major military operations featuring tens of thousands of troops. Second, transform the underlying sociopolitical dynamics that drive jihadist ideology. Doing so would require catalyzing political liberalization in the Islamic world, so the United States would have to engage in nation building and democracy promotion in all countries where it had intervened to root out terrorism.

The allure of this option is that it offers, in theory at least, the chance to win the war on terrorism once and for all. This reflects a crucial insight from the Iraq war. Even if U.S. officials blundered when they chose to invade Iraq, they made just as grave a mistake in committing insufficient troops and resources to Iraqi reconstruction and in pulling U.S. troops out so precipitously in 2011, which jeopardized U.S. soldiers' hard-won gains. Since half measures and premature withdrawal end only in long-term failure, the logic goes, better to take a shot at

winning decisively, despite the extremely high cost.

Yet that cost—which must be borne for many years—is precisely the problem with this strategy. Transforming the politics of the greater Middle East in the ways the United States would want would be a huge challenge under any circumstances. And without a shock the size of 9/11, even a determined U.S. administration would probably lack the political will to sustain the necessary level of spending and deployments—and suffer the resulting casualties—over the long term. The result might be the worst of all worlds: the United States would invest vast resources up-front without the commitment necessary to see the project through.

This is not the only liability. A surge risks distorting U.S. grand strategy by pouring resources into counterterrorism at the expense of other vital issues, such as climate change, the rise of China, and a revanchist Russia. What's more, putting more skin in the game might just encourage other countries to free-ride on U.S. efforts. Finally, a strategy that relies on large military interventions in the greater Middle East risks provoking all the blowback that a lighter footprint would avoid. Terrorists would attack U.S. forces, whose presence in the Middle East would validate the jihadist narrative of a U.S. crusade against Muslims.

Whatever its attractions, then, a surge strategy would face daunting, probably insurmountable obstacles. No wonder, then, that no major candidate in the 2016 presidential race advocated anything close to this option—and that Trump has explicitly taken this sort of nation building off the table.



### **STEADY AS SHE GOES**

The tragedy of the United States' war on terrorism is that it has no clean solution. Each of the four main options for fighting terrorism has flaws, in some cases crippling ones. But the United States must have a strategy. So which one should it pick? U.S. officials should discard the two extremes, disengagement and surge, on pragmatic grounds. Disengaging would bet the house on an untested hypothesis—that pulling back would significantly reduce the terrorist threat—which would leave the United States terribly vulnerable if it proved false. Few prudent politicians would hazard their careers on such a wager. The surge approach, for its part, would be enormously difficult to execute, and because of its extremely high cost, politicians would likely lack the stamina to stay the course.

That leaves the two middle-ground options: a light footprint and counter-ISIS plus. Of these, the former has a lousy recent track record, as ISIS emerged and the United States' position deteriorated dramatically the last time this strategy dominated U.S. policy. Employing it would risk starting a cycle in which a U.S. pullback causes the threat to increase, compelling the United States to intervene again under worse circumstances than before. The strategy thus also occupies a precarious political footing: it would probably not survive a repetition of the type of attacks that occurred in late 2015 and 2016, when ISIS-inspired shooters killed 63 people in San Bernardino and Orlando.

So the last strategy standing is counter-ISIS plus. True, it has real problems and risks doing no more than failing at greater expense than

the light-footprint approach. But it succeeded both when the Bush administration and when the Obama administration employed it aggressively, and it could well eliminate the worst aspect of the terrorist threat—the existence of breeding grounds for mass-casualty attacks—if pursued consistently. The cost of doing so would hardly be trivial, but a wealthy superpower could manage it. Additionally, although this approach would probably not produce exceptional performance from U.S. partners, it might help them do well enough to limit U.S. costs over the long run. Finally, despite Trump's harsh critiques of the Obama administration's campaign against ISIS, this approach is probably the most politically salable.

The Trump administration should thus take this variant of the strategy that the Obama administration had built up to by 2016 as its guide. It is not perfect and will not end the war on terrorism anytime soon. But it may give the United States a minimally acceptable level of security in a dangerous struggle. 🌐

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# Trump and the Holy Land

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## First, Do No Harm

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*Dana H. Allin and  
Steven N. Simon*

Every U.S. president since Harry Truman has sought peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Every president since Lyndon Johnson has opposed the building of Jewish settlements on land that Israel occupied in June 1967 and has supported a diplomatic solution by which the Jewish state would trade much of that land for a secure and lasting peace. And every president since Bill Clinton has worked for a two-state solution under which Israel would enjoy security and genuine acceptance in the Middle East and the Palestinians would run their own affairs and prosper in a viable, independent state.

Achieving these goals has never been easy, and Washington's attempts to put the Israelis and the Palestinians on the path to peace have regularly been stymied by rejectionism on both sides. Palestinian leaders have proved unable or unwilling to grasp past diplomatic opportunities,

and the current Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the most right-wing in Israel's history, represents segments of society that are fixated on a vision of an Israel that excludes Palestinian aspirations and rights. The Obama administration made a serious effort to break the impasse but failed, and the status quo is probably unsustainable. Although any new administration would find the landscape daunting, the United States' strategic interests and moral values call for continued opposition to Israeli settlements in occupied territory, a continued insistence that the Palestinians pursue their cause through peaceful means, a continued commitment to a two-state solution, and continued attentiveness to Israel's strategic vulnerabilities. In other words, the most basic requirement is to do no harm, thus following in the tradition of past presidents.

Donald Trump, it must be said, looks like a different kind of president. In his coldness toward the vision of a Palestinian state and his indifference to the problem of settlements, he has aligned himself with Israel's right wing, and his surprise victory gave that camp hope that their dreams of absorbing the Palestinian territories into Israel might be fulfilled, unencumbered by American scolding or restraint. Israeli conservatives may well envision an alliance between the most illiberal elements of both societies, in which the United States and Israel fight their shared enemies of Iran and radical Islam, without having to worry about the niceties that concerned the Obama administration so much. President Barack Obama took the view that the construction and expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank was killing any remaining

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They are the authors of *Our Separate Ways: The Struggle for the Future of the U.S.-Israel Alliance*.

prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For Israel's hard right, killing the two-state solution is a feature, not a bug, of the new dispensation.

But other Israelis rightly fear the death of that long-standing proposal. The direct financial costs of occupation may be relatively low, and the diplomatic costs manageable. But the overall price will rise over time—not just in terms of military incursions into the territories or other expensive deployments to restore order should it break down but also in terms of the damage to the Israeli polity itself and Israel's place in the world. The imperatives of continued occupation entail depriving Palestinians of civil rights, which will ultimately damage the democratic constitutional order in Israel. That will, in turn, complicate Israel's foreign relations, particularly in the West. Many Israelis believe that withdrawal from the West Bank in the context of a peace accord would involve unreasonable risks, but those risks must be weighed against the risks of continued occupation.

### **OBAMA'S LEGACY**

Like NATO, the U.S.-Israeli alliance was founded not only on mutual strategic interests but also on cultural connections and shared democratic values. But the similarities end there: the partnership between the United States and Israel does not include a defense treaty, and the bond of shared values has been steadily weakened by cultural and demographic changes in both countries, as well as by the manifest failures of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Obama, whose liberal Zionism was nurtured in a circle of progressive

Chicago Jews supporting his political rise, entered the White House with a strong conviction that some form of tough love was necessary to restore the moral basis of the alliance. Under his tenure, the United States finally, and decisively, confronted Jerusalem on the growth of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories when, in 2009, he demanded a complete freeze on new construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (although he later accepted a partial freeze that excluded Jerusalem). To preserve confidence between the two allies, however, Obama also recommitted the United States to the security relationship, by substantially increasing the amount of U.S. security assistance to Israel, notably for missile defense.

It didn't work. Israeli officials, including Netanyahu, have acknowledged that the Obama administration offered unstinting military and security cooperation. But that support was overshadowed—not only by the confrontation over settlements but also by tectonic regional shifts that opened multiple chasms between the two countries. Israelis across the political spectrum were shocked by the United States' decision to urge Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak out of office in 2011, by its cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi after he won the Egyptian presidency the following year, and by its distinct lack of enthusiasm for the military coup that drove Morsi from office the year after that. Along with Sunni Arab regimes, Israel was likewise alarmed by Obama's failure to launch air strikes to enforce his "redline" on Syria's use of chemical weapons.

Then there was Iran. There, Obama's two overriding priorities were to prevent



*The writing's on the wall: in Tel Aviv, November 2016*

the development of nuclear weapons and to avoid getting entangled in another Middle Eastern war. He correctly decided that the only way to reconcile those objectives was to negotiate an agreement that would block Iran's pathways to a weapon. The result was the Iran nuclear deal—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Agreed to in July 2015, the JCPOA marked one of the Obama administration's greatest diplomatic achievements. Yet because the deal left Iran with a latent nuclear program, the Israeli government found it intolerable, as Netanyahu had made dramatically clear to a joint session of the U.S. Congress as it was being negotiated. From the Obama administration's perspective, Israel also moved the goalposts: unable to deny that the agreement would prevent Iran from posing a nuclear threat for the next decade, it began complaining

about the United States' alleged acquiescence to Iran's regional aggression. These gaps in perceptions and priorities were so deep as to constitute a conflict of strategic interests between the United States and Israel.

Netanyahu's failed campaign to derail the JCPOA had the side effect of darkening the mood surrounding renegotiation of the ten-year memorandum of understanding that governs U.S. military aid to Israel. Netanyahu might have won a better deal had he finalized it in 2015, but he delayed it for a year. The memorandum of understanding that Israel signed in 2016 looks generous on its face—\$38 billion over the next decade—but some of the fine print is, from an Israeli perspective, disappointing. Among other new restrictions, the agreement precludes the possibility that Israel could approach Congress for additional funding during the lifetime



of the agreement in an effort to make an end run around the executive branch.

Looming over all these tensions was the Obama administration's failure to make progress on the peace process. Secretary of State John Kerry's peace mission during Obama's second term was dogged, courageous—and futile. Obama's early insistence on a settlements freeze, along with his outreach to the world's Muslims, fueled deep Israeli distrust. Yet the White House had its own grounds for suspicion: despite his pronouncements otherwise, Netanyahu has never behaved as though he is genuinely committed to a two-state solution, and some members of his current government are openly hostile to the idea. By the end of Kerry's mission, in 2014, Washington and Jerusalem were trading *ad hominem* attacks, much of them on the record, that were truly astonishing for supposed allies.

Last December, when the UN Security Council considered a resolution condemning Israeli settlements, the Obama administration decided not to exercise the United States' customary protective veto, and the measure passed. Furious, Netanyahu called the abstention a "shameful ambush" and support for the resolution itself "a declaration of war." Trump, meanwhile, announced on Twitter that Israel should "stay strong" until he came to its rescue. The resolution did not promise any foreseeable breakthrough, but nor did it derail the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: there was no functioning peace process to be derailed. For the Obama administration, it represented the last chance before Trump took office to define the elements of a deal and reinforce them through a clear international consensus.

## **A PATH TO PEACE**

A wise set of policies for any new administration would start with the recognition that the Obama-Netanyahu years of trouble were not simply the result of clashing personalities. Rather, they reflected a deep process of alienation between two states and societies. The goal now should be to reinforce the moral bond and minimize the strategic divergence.

As for the former, it is worth remembering that even the George W. Bush administration, which embraced Israel as a partner in the war on terrorism, considered democratic values an indispensable bond between the two countries. After the death of the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, in 2004, Bush leaned on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to return to the negotiating table. In Bush's view, Israel's security cooperation with the United States didn't obviate the need for a peace process aimed at expanding the democratic rights of those Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. For Bush, that connection was intuitive and vital. After the Cold War, a mutually reinforcing and supportive network of liberalizing societies and democratizing governments had emerged. The U.S.-Israeli alliance formed part of that network, which meant that Israel's rule over the Palestinians could not stand.

It is an illusion that shared strategic interests will be enough to sustain the kind of alliance that both the United States and Israel have cherished. During the later Cold War years, the Reagan administration looked to Israel for important air bases where carrier-based aircraft could land if denied access to a carrier deck. Soon enough, however, the Cold War ended and, with it, the Soviet

threat to the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet and to Saudi Arabia. It soon became clear that although the United States was Israel's ultimate security guarantor, Israel couldn't be the United States', or do much to help the United States defend its interests in the Arab world. As the George H. W. Bush administration assembled a coalition to drive Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in 1990, its main request to Israel was that it make itself scarce. After 9/11, the United States and Israel would discover a shared interest in combating Islamic radicalism. Even on that, however, the United States and Israel have not really perceived the same threat: the United States has been concerned with fighting al Qaeda and the Islamic State, or ISIS, both of which rank low on Israel's priority list; Israel has cared more about Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, none of which has targeted Americans in recent years.

Indeed, after the United States sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, some in the highest echelons of the U.S. military took the view that close relations with Israel posed a distinct liability in the fight against terrorism. During his time as the head of U.S. Central Command, for example, General David Petraeus argued that the United States' association with Israel, because of the anger its policies toward the Palestinians caused in the Arab world, impeded U.S. cooperation with Middle Eastern governments.

So grave are the U.S.-Israeli alliance's prospects that it is time for an audacious grand bargain aimed at reconnecting its moral and strategic dimensions. This should take the form of a treaty formally committing the United States to Israel's defense, including through nuclear

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are leaders,  
but all leaders  
are readers.**

*- Harry S. Truman*

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deterrence, in exchange for Israel's acceptance of the well-established U.S. parameters for a two-state solution. Admittedly, there is reason to doubt that a Republican administration would insist on both sides of this bargain, or that Israel would accept it. So nothing this big is likely to happen anytime soon.

Yet at a minimum, Washington should maintain its commitment to its long-standing moral and strategic objectives. These include opposing the expansion of Israeli settlements and insisting that the Palestinian leadership recognize Israel—and its *de facto* Jewish character—and clamp down on terrorism and anti-Israel incitement. Washington must couple its expectation that Jerusalem will one day be home to two U.S. embassies, one for Israel and one for Palestine, with the realization that moving the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv today would provoke angry, possibly violent protests in the West Bank and beyond. Even though Israelis and Palestinians alike have lost faith that a two-state solution will come to pass in their lifetime, the United States has no other vision that can reconcile its moral duty to Israel with its commitment to democracy. Therefore, it must not acquiesce to any creeping or precipitous annexation by Israel of the West Bank.

When it comes to countering the threat from Iran, the United States and Israel should predicate their efforts on making the JCPOA work, rather than causing it to fail. The U.S. government should resume the close consultations with Israel on Iran that took place during Obama's presidency, including sharing intelligence regarding Iranian compliance with the deal and undertaking contingency planning for military

options in the case of truly threatening noncompliance.

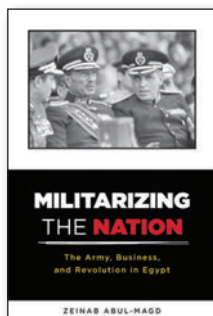
Finally, U.S. policymakers should resist Israeli bids to renegotiate the 2016 memorandum of understanding. This might seem like a modest technical matter, and it may be tempting to make concessions in the service of improving the atmospherics of the relationship. Yet for the United States to go down the slippery slope of having negotiated a ten-year agreement only to renegotiate it six months later would simply encourage Israel's tendency to game the American system of divided government, to the detriment of a consistent U.S. foreign policy.

## **ENTER TRUMP**

Trump's statements on Israel have contained bluster and contradictions, and so in this area, as in many others, it is hard to know how seriously to take them as policy pronouncements. Still, the general drift has been clear. Trump promised that dismantling the JCPOA would be his "number one priority" and that Iranian ships would be "shot out of the water" if they behaved aggressively. He pledged to "move the American embassy to the eternal capital of the Jewish people, Jerusalem," and although this has long been a standard Republican campaign promise, Trump may lack the wisdom of past presidents to not fulfill it once in office. In the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, the Republican Party platform, which Trump called "the most pro-Israel of all time," omitted its traditional nod to a two-state solution. During the wrangling over the UN Security Council resolution in December, at Israel's behest, President-elect Trump persuaded Egyptian President Abdel



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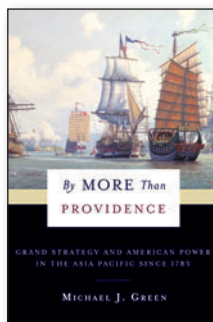
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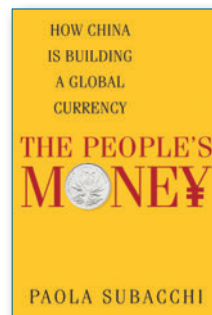
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Fattah el-Sisi to withdraw Egypt's draft resolution (in the end, four other countries took it forward). Most notably, Trump chose his personal bankruptcy lawyer, David Friedman, for the post of U.S. ambassador to Israel. Friedman has close ties to the Israeli settler movement, and he has accused Obama of "blatant anti-Semitism" and called liberal American Jews who are critical of Israel's government "far worse than kapos"—referring to Jewish prisoners who acted as supervisors in Nazi concentration camps.

To be sure, Trump has also appointed key cabinet heads who hold more traditional foreign policy views. Rex Tillerson, for example, Trump's choice for secretary of state, came to his attention with backing from three establishment Republicans, James Baker, Robert Gates, and Condoleezza Rice, all of whom embody the old-school tradition of seeking balance between Israel and the Arabs. Trump's pick for defense secretary, General James Mattis, has warned that giving up on the two-state solution would mean that "either [Israel] ceases to be a Jewish state or you say the Arabs don't get to vote—apartheid." He added, "That didn't work too well the last time I saw that." Like Petraeus, Mattis, when he was the commander of U.S. Central Command, noted the relationship's downsides. "I paid a military-security price every day as the commander of CENTCOM because the Americans were seen as biased in support of Israel," he said.

#### **DANGER AHEAD**

The UN Security Council resolution, Obama's parting gift to Trump, offers Mattis and other like-minded officials

something to hold on to if they remain firm in their assessment that permanent Israeli control over the West Bank and its Arab inhabitants is not in the United States' interest. For the most part, however, the path that the new administration seems determined to go down looks dangerous for both countries.

Trump's tough talk against Iran and the nuclear deal may be music to many Israelis' ears. Yet it is difficult to perceive a coherent plan for turning it into a strategic gain for the United States. If Trump reneges on the JCPOA, or provokes Tehran into abandoning it, Iran will most likely restart its nuclear program. At that point, the United States would have lost the necessary international support for renewed sanctions or other pressures; military action could be the only remaining option for quashing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Yet American or Israeli air strikes would only convince Iran to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and race toward a weapon. Iran's nuclear program could be delayed through military action, but soon enough, the Iranians would get back to work, and the Americans or the Israelis would have to set the program back again. This is a recipe for endless war.

Moreover, the Trumpian version of a counterterrorism alliance makes little strategic sense. Trump has not just called for banning Muslims from entering the United States; he has also picked a national security adviser, General Michael Flynn, who has called Islam "a malignant cancer" and "a political ideology [that] definitely hides behind this notion of it being a religion." As campaign rhetoric, such statements have already caused considerable damage, and if translated into actual policy, they will further

alienate Muslims in the United States and abroad, with dangerous ramifications for U.S. national security. If these consequences unfold, Americans' confidence in an outward-looking foreign policy will be shaken at least as badly as it was by the misadventures of the George W. Bush administration. Such trauma cannot be good for U.S. allies, Israel included. Although the idea of an alliance even partly based on anti-Islamic fervor of the type espoused by Flynn is conceivable, the Trump administration's anxieties about Islam are global, whereas Israel's are both more specific geographically and focused on Hamas and Hezbollah.

When it comes to the fraught relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, some will argue that bipartisan U.S. solutions have failed and it is time to move in a radically new direction—to which the only proper response is that things could get much worse. If the United States ended its opposition to unbridled settlement activity in the West Bank and even the territory's annexation—to acquiesce, in effect, to the permanent subjugation of the more than 2.5 million Palestinians living there—the results would be damaging. Such a move would no doubt foment more despair and more violence in the form of another Palestinian uprising, with an inevitably harsh Israeli response that, even if Trump himself approved, many Americans would not understand. What is more fundamental, official U.S. indifference to the plight of the Palestinians would further undermine the shared values that have bound the United States and Israel to each other for the better part of seven decades. This is unknown territory. Both Washington and Jerusalem should be wary of entering it.

Ominously, the snuffing out of a liberal vision for the region, one in which two states live side by side in peace, could represent part of a larger global movement. It's possible to imagine Trump and Netanyahu joining forces with Vladimir Putin's Russia and European right-wing populists in the kind of Judeo-Christian civilizational alliance promoted by Steve Bannon, the ethnonationalist Trump adviser who has spoken of a "global Tea Party movement" comprising Trump voters in the United States, Brexit supporters in the United Kingdom, National Front partisans in France, and Hindu nationalists in India, all rising to defend Western capitalism. Many of Trump's supporters may well be indifferent to liberal concerns about Palestinian rights.

There is a problem, however, with a U.S.-Israeli alliance based on Trumpian values: in the United States, the adherents to those values are aging and, in relative terms, diminishing in number. On both the left and the right, Americans' visceral affinity for Zionism is fading away. An overtly illiberal U.S.-Israeli alliance would further erode the bipartisan basis of U.S.-Israeli ties, a process that Netanyahu advanced when he aligned himself so closely with the Republican Party during the 2012 U.S. presidential election and, later, when he tried to derail the Iran nuclear deal. If Trump governs as he campaigned, his brand will remain toxic to more than half of the U.S. electorate, and that toxicity could mar the image of an Israeli government that embraced him closely.

It would be imprudent, after the Trump upset, to make confident predictions about the political consequences of demographic changes. But the uncertainties extend in every direction, with

unknowable, and potentially damaging, consequences for U.S.-Israeli ties. Trump's campaign energized a fringe anti-Semitism on the so-called alt-right, a development that will not endear the new president to an American Jewish community that voted by a wide margin for Hillary Clinton and already has large pockets of disaffection with Israeli policies. There is also left-wing illiberalism, which has erupted sporadically on American campuses in a strain of anti-Zionism that verges on anti-Semitism. What can be predicted with reasonable confidence is that the Trump years—whether four or eight—will bring even sharper polarization. The Israeli right has chosen a dangerous moment to ally itself so closely with the Republican Party.

Moreover, projections of a honeymoon between Washington and Jerusalem, during which the Trump administration enables every unilateral Israeli impulse, must reckon with Trump's narrow conception of U.S. interests. To begin with, Trump's understanding of alliances should not be particularly reassuring from an Israeli perspective: he sees them as transactional deals always subject to a cost-benefit review. Nor should his view of U.S. leadership: Trump has repeatedly evinced a preference for faraway regions to manage their own problems. As a candidate, he said that he would serve as a neutral broker between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and in their confirmation hearings, both Mattis and Tillerson testified that they would not tear up the JCPOA. It's not hard to imagine Israeli policymakers assuming that a sympathetic Trump will run interference for, or just overlook, unilateral Israeli actions that could prove destabilizing, such as the expropriation of large tracts

of West Bank land or actions that jeopardized the JCPOA and drew the United States into an armed conflict.

That said, Trump's campaign and presidential transition have defied the traditional norms of U.S. politics, so it is probably a mistake to predict or analyze his administration's policies on the basis of precedent. In fact, it's possible that Trump may defy expectations in a positive direction, for example, by making good on a statement he made in a meeting with journalists at *The New York Times* after the election: "I would love to be able to be the one that made peace with Israel and the Palestinians." Perhaps, in his fascination with "the art of the deal," Trump will be inspired to go for it. But given some worrying trends in Israel—the political imbalance created by an ineffectual, shrinking center-left; the broad popularity of the right, especially among younger Israeli Jews; and demographic trends that do not appear to favor territorial compromise—and the dire state of the rest of the Middle East, there is also the potential for considerable harm to be inflicted by ill-advised policies, or even tweets. 🌐



# Trump and North Korea

## Reviving the Art of the Deal

*John Delury*

In the next four years, North Korea is poised to cross a dangerous threshold by finally developing the capability to hit the continental United States with a nuclear missile. That ability would present a direct threat to the United States and could punch a hole in the U.S. nuclear umbrella in Asia: Japan and South Korea, doubtful that Washington would risk U.S. cities to defend Tokyo or Seoul, might feel they had no choice but to get their own nuclear bombs. U.S. President Donald Trump, while still president-elect, drew a redline at Pyongyang's feet, tweeting, "It won't happen!" But the real question is how to stop it.

Hawks argue that Washington should act now by imposing harsh new economic sanctions or undertaking preemptive military strikes. But neither option would end well. Slapping Pyongyang with still more sanctions would only encourage it to sprint toward the completion of a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile. And military action could lead to the destruction of Seoul (which sits within range of North Korean artillery) and expose U.S. forces in Guam, Japan, and South Korea to devastating retaliation, potentially

triggering a catastrophic war in one of the world's most populous and prosperous regions.

If the United States really hopes to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula, it should stop looking for ways to stifle North Korea's economy and undermine Kim Jong Un's regime and start finding ways to make Pyongyang feel more secure. This might sound counterintuitive, given North Korea's nuclear ambitions and human rights record. But consider this: North Korea will start focusing on its prosperity instead of its self-preservation only once it no longer has to worry about its own destruction. And North Korea will consider surrendering its nuclear deterrent only once it feels secure and prosperous and is economically integrated into Northeast Asia. What's more, the world can best help most North Koreans by relieving their deprivation and bringing down the walls that separate them from the outside world. Washington's immediate goal should therefore be to negotiate a freeze of North Korea's nuclear program in return for a U.S. security guarantee, since that is the only measure that could enable Kim to start concentrating on economic development and the belated transformation of North Korea.

Trump seems open to this approach to the North Korean conundrum. Even in his most hawkish moment, when he threatened to bomb North Korean targets during his failed presidential bid in 2000, he insisted, "I'm no war-monger," and argued that only negotiation would bring a lasting solution. And last year on the campaign trail, he said that he "would have no problem speaking" to Kim. A businessman at heart, Trump will not be likely to turn down a good deal.

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Kim also appears ready to do business. After taking power in 2012, he unveiled a new national strategy that put equal emphasis on security and prosperity. So far, however, he has focused primarily on consolidating his domestic power and building up the country's nuclear arsenal. Trump can now help him pivot to the economy, as Kim appears to have wanted to do all along. However unlikely a pair the two might seem, Kim and Trump are well positioned to strike the kind of deal that could lower the grave risks both their countries (and the region) now face. Such a move would also allow Trump to reaffirm U.S. leadership in a region critical to U.S. interests, and to finally start resolving a problem that has bedeviled every U.S. president since Harry Truman.

### **SINS OF THE FATHER**

In order to understand why such a deal could work, consider how far North Korea has come over the past two decades. In 1994, the year Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, came to power, the country was heading into a perfect storm. The collapse of the Soviet Union three years earlier had abruptly ended Moscow's previously generous support. North Korea's other erstwhile Cold War benefactor—China—also cut back on its subsidies and even normalized relations with the North's principal enemy, South Korea. When massive floods hit, North Korea's already-stagnating economy went into a tailspin. Before long, the country was suffering a horrific famine that, according to the most conservative estimates, would take many hundreds of thousands of lives. Scrambling to survive, Kim called on his people to endure an "arduous march"

through an era of "military-first politics." Kim gave power to his generals and rations to their troops, at the expense of party cadres and the rest of the population. He boosted defense spending even as his people starved. And he abandoned tentative reforms under pressure from hard-liners. His military-first strategy kept the regime alive and the country intact—but at a brutal cost.

By the time Kim died, in 2011, North Korea had recovered considerably—enough so that Kim Jong Un could use his inaugural address to signal an end to his father's military-first policies. Never again, he promised, would his people have to "tighten their belts." A year later, Kim launched a new doctrine, which called for "simultaneous progress" on nuclear deterrence and economic development. It was "a new historic turning point," Kim told the Party Central Committee in 2013, when North Korea could develop its economy and improve its living standards.

Kim's interest in economic progress goes beyond mere sloganeering. At the same time that he unveiled his strategy of "simultaneous progress," he appointed Pak Pong Ju, a reformist technocrat, to be the country's top economic official. To improve efficiency, Kim decentralized control over management decisions to farms and factories. He set up a dozen "special economic zones" and has largely left the country's extensive informal markets alone to work their magic. Through high-profile visits to new shopping malls, high-rise apartments, and pop music concerts, he has publicly embraced Pyongyang's emerging consumer class. All these measures have helped the North Korean economy grow by a modest one to two percent

per year since he took power—despite tight sanctions and limited foreign investment—and the capital city is booming, although much of the population elsewhere still languishes at near-subsistence levels.

Yet belying these efforts, Kim has focused his energy more on nuclear than on economic development. In 2016 alone, he staged two nuclear and 24 missile tests. Kim seems to be sticking to a general principle of international politics that puts security before prosperity. North Korea's leader will put the economy first—and open up the country in the way this would require—only if and when he starts feeling confident that he has secured his position at home and neutralized the threats from abroad. After five years in which he demoted generals, reshuffled top cadres, and even executed his own uncle, Kim seems to have accomplished the former goal. But so far, the latter remains out of reach.

### **LET'S MAKE A DEAL**

To get there, Pyongyang will need a breakthrough in its relationship with Washington. That was unlikely to happen as long as U.S. President Barack Obama remained in office: because of his belief that the regime could not outlive Kim Jong Il's death, and then the wishful notion that Beijing could solve the problem for him, Obama never showed much interest in striking a grand bargain with Pyongyang. Such indifference only encouraged Kim to maintain his father's reliance on nuclear weapons as a guarantor of his security.

With Kim now feeling far safer at home, the United States needs to help him find a nonnuclear way to feel secure along his borders. A comprehensive deal is the best way to accomplish this, but it will

require direct dialogue with Pyongyang. Trump should start by holding back-channel talks. If those make enough progress, he should then send an envoy to Pyongyang, who could negotiate a nuclear freeze (and, perhaps, as a goodwill gesture on the part of Pyongyang, secure the release of the two U.S. citizens imprisoned in North Korea). Trump could then initiate high-level talks that would culminate in a meeting between Kim and himself.

In order to convince Kim to freeze the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons and the missiles that carry them, Washington will need to design a package of security guarantees and political incentives, along with the practical means to verify Kim's compliance. Trump should offer Kim substantive concessions, well beyond the food aid that Obama proposed to send in the 2012 Leap Day Deal (scuttled almost as soon as it was announced by a new North Korean satellite test). Trump could offer to scale back or suspend U.S.–South Korean military exercises and delay the deployment of new U.S. military assets to the Korean Peninsula. As long as the diplomacy moved forward, the United States could safely postpone these military moves. Trump could also suggest convening four-power talks among China, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States to negotiate and sign a treaty formally ending the Korean War, as Pyongyang has long demanded. Trump could further consider offering symbolic actions that would give Kim room to maneuver, such as setting up liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang and moving toward the normalization of diplomatic relations.

Direct negotiations are the only way to find out just what steps Kim is ready to take now and which will have to wait



*Deal with it: Kim Jong Un delivering a speech in Pyongyang, August 2016*

until mutual confidence grows. Whatever Kim's comfort level, however, Washington should, in the first phase, ask Pyongyang to halt further development of its nuclear and long-range ballistic missile programs and allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors back into the country to verify compliance. Negotiators would also have to tackle the dual-use dilemma: North Korea currently insists on its right to launch satellites, which the United States considers de facto ballistic missile tests. To separate the two issues, Trump should ask Kim to let Russia launch all his satellites for him (a solution Kim's father suggested to Russian President Vladimir Putin back in 2000). In return, the United States would officially acknowledge North Korea's sovereign right to a peaceful space program.

The bilateral discussions should go beyond nuclear security, however. Trump should press Kim to take concrete steps to improve North Korean human rights, such as relaxing restrictions on travel abroad,

allowing foreign humanitarian organizations more freedom in North Korea, and closing political prison camps. Discussing how to manage the rise of China, meanwhile, might yield some useful surprises, since both Kim and Trump want to keep Beijing guessing. Making progress on these issues would prove the wisdom of Trump's campaign promise to talk to Kim so long as there was "a ten percent or a 20 percent chance that [he could] talk him out of those damn nukes."

#### **THE NEXT ASIAN TIGER**

Initiating talks on a nuclear freeze would immediately relax tensions between Washington and Pyongyang and lower risks in the region. But even if both sides agreed on new security arrangements, that would not solve the long-term threat posed by North Korea's nuclear arsenal. It would, however, create an opening for further negotiation. The United States would then need to use it by moving swiftly to the crux of the deal: helping Kim



plot a path to prosperity by integrating North Korea's economy into the region.

If the United States were to loosen sanctions in step with Kim's initial freeze and subsequent moves, North Korea's location at the crossroads of Northeast Asia would give it a natural advantage. Businesses in China's northeastern provinces and the Russian Far East would readily ship their goods through North Korea's ice-free port at Rason, a short trip from Busan, South Korea's international shipping hub. Building an oil and gas pipeline through North Korea would allow Russian energy companies to reach South Korean consumers more cheaply. International financial institutions could help Pyongyang stabilize its currency and improve its data collection, as well as providing development assistance. North Korea could also become a popular place for light industrial manufacturing, given its low wages and its industrious, disciplined, and educated work force (as demonstrated by the productivity of North Korean factory workers at the Kaesong joint industrial zone). Finally, Kim could attract foreign partners to help develop the country's rich natural resources, which include, by some estimates, trillions of dollars' worth of coal and iron ore, precious metals, and rare earths.

Although Kim has already enacted some basic economic reforms, détente with the United States could usher in the next phase of North Korea's development. Such development would generate powerful new domestic business interests, which would slowly push the country toward more international cooperation. Convincing Kim to hand over his last bomb could take decades, and the world may never reach the perfect outcome of

complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization. But short of that, the United States could make huge progress in reversing the current trajectory of ever-rising capabilities and risks.

### **CRITICS AT HOME, ALLIES ABROAD**

Should Trump attempt to break the North Korean logjam, he will get plenty of criticism from multiple directions. But he will also win support in the one place that really counts: South Korea.

Hard-liners in the United States would condemn Trump for throwing Kim a lifeline when (they would claim) North Korea is tottering on the brink of collapse. But such arguments do not stand the test of history. Wishful thinking about North Korea's imminent collapse has compromised U.S. strategy for far too long. Obama, envisioning a day when "the Korean people, at long last, will be whole and free," squandered the early years of Kim Jong Un's reign in the mistaken belief that the regime would not survive long following Kim Jong Il's death.

But survive it did, and it's high time for Washington to recognize that not only is Kim's regime unlikely to collapse anytime soon but economic sanctions have done more harm than good. The Obama administration tried many times to goad Beijing into imposing sanctions that would break Pyongyang's nuclear will, and U.S. officials hailed each new UN Security Council resolution sanctioning North Korea as a game changer. Yet eight years of effort have yielded only a dramatic increase in the North's nuclear arsenal and its ability to deliver those weapons. Because of its overriding interest in a stable, divided Korean Peninsula, China will never impose an economic embargo on its neighbor. Even if Beijing

did enforce comprehensive sanctions, Kim would respond by doubling down on his nuclear weapons program. Targeted sanctions can slow proliferation somewhat, but wholesale sanctions designed to change North Korea's calculus have never worked and never will.

Another, more aggressive group of hard-liners will chide Trump for refusing to order preemptive strikes against North Korea's nuclear program. But the time for preemption passed long ago. The regime already possesses a modest nuclear arsenal and the means to hit targets in Guam, Japan, and South Korea. Its nuclear and missile programs are dispersed underground, underwater, and in other secret locations across the country.

Because the United States could not take out such weapons with a single blow, Pyongyang would almost certainly retain the ability to respond to any attack in kind—and respond it would. In a best-case scenario, Kim would retaliate by launching only conventional missiles and only against U.S. military installations in South Korea, and both Seoul and Washington would refrain from further escalation. Some Americans and South Koreans would be killed, but the fighting would at least stop there. Under an equally plausible worst-case scenario, however, the situation could quickly deteriorate into a catastrophe if North Korea unleashed artillery barrages on the civilian population in Seoul, triggering retaliatory attacks on Pyongyang. It's worth remembering that 20 years ago, General Gary Luck, then the commander of U.S. forces in Korea, estimated that a war with the North would take a million lives and do \$1 trillion worth of damage to the South Korean economy. And that was before Pyongyang got the bomb.

None of the alternatives to a deal—doing nothing (waiting for North Korea to collapse), doing too little (relying on China to impose sanctions), or doing too much (starting a second Korean War)—holds any promise for success.

By contrast, not only is the ground ripe for a grand bargain, but should Trump pursue one, he will likely find a powerful ally in Seoul. Although South Koreans live under the constant threat of nuclear attack from the North, the public there firmly opposes preemptive military strikes against Pyongyang. If the United States unilaterally bombed North Korea, its alliance with the South might be the first casualty. Thanks to the downfall of South Korea's conservative president, Park Geun-hye, liberal politicians—who embrace comprehensive engagement as the only long-term solution to the conflict—are well positioned to win back the presidency this year. But even a conservative leader may well favor a moderate approach to the North, and so Trump can probably count on whoever becomes South Korea's next president to backstop a bold approach by Washington.

In January 2016, a few days after North Korea's fourth nuclear test, Trump said of Kim: "This guy doesn't play games, and we can't play games with him, because he really does have missiles, and he really does have nukes." Trump was right. Like it or not, North Korea's nukes are a reality. The United States needs a new strategy for dealing with Kim—and Trump is well placed to deliver it. 🌐

# Trump and World Order

## The Return of Self-Help

*Stewart M. Patrick*

Since the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, 13 successive U.S. presidents have agreed that the United States must assume the mantle of global leadership. Although foreign policy varied from president to president, all sent the clear message that the country stood for more than just its own well-being and that the world economy was not a zero-sum game.

That is about to change. U.S. President Donald Trump has promised a foreign policy that is nationalist and transactional, focused on securing narrow material gains for the United States. He has enunciated no broader vision of the United States' traditional role as defender of the free world, much less outlined how the country might play that part. In foreign policy and economics, he has made clear that the pursuit of narrow national advantage will guide his policies—apparently regardless of the impact on the liberal world order that the United States has championed since 1945.

That order was fraying well before November 8. It had been battered from without by challenges from China and

Russia and weakened from within by economic malaise in Japan and crises in Europe, including the epochal Brexit vote last year. No one knows what Trump will do as president. But as a candidate, he vowed to shake up world politics by reassessing long-standing U.S. alliances, ripping up existing U.S. trade deals, raising trade barriers against China, disavowing the Paris climate agreement, and repudiating the nuclear accord with Iran. Should he follow through on these provocative plans, Trump will unleash forces beyond his control, sharpening the crisis of the Western-centered order.

Some countries will resist this new course, joining alliances intended to oppose U.S. influence or thwarting U.S. aims within international institutions. Others will simply acquiesce, trying to maintain ties with Washington because they feel they have no other options, wish to retain certain security and economic benefits, or share a sense of ideological kinship. Still others will react to a suddenly unpredictable United States by starting to hedge their bets.

Like investors, states can manage their risk by diversifying their portfolios. Just as financiers cope with market volatility by making side bets, so countries reduce their vulnerability to unpredictable great powers by sending mixed signals about their alignment. Confronting two great powers, the hedger declines to side with either one, trying to get along with both, placing parallel bets in the hopes of avoiding both domination and abandonment. Hedging is most common when great powers are unpredictable and the global distribution of power is shifting fast—in other words, during times like today.

In recent years, hedging has been confined to Asia, where several of China's

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neighbors have responded to its rise by welcoming a U.S. security presence in the region but have stopped short of signing treaties to become full-fledged U.S. allies. Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Vietnam have all adopted a variant of this strategy. But given the uncertainty about U.S. leadership in the age of Trump, hedging could now spread far beyond Asia.

If this scenario plays out, what would be signs that traditional U.S. partners have begun to hedge their bets? Put differently, what are the canaries in the coal mines around the world that would signal an eroding world order? The warning signs look different in three categories of international relations: geopolitics, economics, and climate change. But in all, they would signal a dwindling faith in the post-1945 liberal order and its longtime champion.

### **INSECURITY SYSTEM**

Hedging would prove most dramatic in geopolitics. Since 1945, the United States has acted as the ultimate guarantor of world order and of regional power balances. Its forward-leaning military presence, nuclear umbrella, and defense guarantees have provided security for many countries that would otherwise have to fend for themselves in an anarchic global system. Trump may abandon all that. Before and after his election, he made provocative statements that caused foreigners to mistrust their long-standing assumptions about U.S. intentions. He called into question the reliability of U.S. alliance commitments and toyed with the prospect of encouraging U.S. allies, such as Japan, to get their own nuclear arsenals.

Think of the United States as an insurance agency. What would happen if

Trump canceled its insurance policies, dramatically increased individual premiums, or cast doubt on payouts? In all likelihood, some policyholders would begin hedging their bets between the United States and the most relevant regional power—China in Asia, Russia in Europe, and Iran in the Middle East. Such hedging would partly take place internally, as countries built up their individual capabilities for self-defense and bolstered regional bodies. But it would also occur externally, as traditional U.S. partners accommodated U.S. rivals and made their own ultimate intentions unclear.

Hedging would serve as an important signaling device. By increasing the ambiguity of their alignment, states could demonstrate to Washington that it is not the only party capable of pursuing strategic flexibility and imposing costs on former partners. Hedging would also suggest to the aspiring regional hegemon that new opportunities for cooperation were available, provided that certain limits were observed. Current U.S. partners would in effect be trading alignment with Washington—a diminishing asset given Trump's unpredictability—for greater autonomy.

In Asia, hedging against U.S. unreliability could upend the regional security order. Although China now stands at the center of the Asian economy, the United States has, since World War II, guaranteed security through a network of alliances and partnerships. But this could change if the Trump administration increases uncertainty about Washington's staying power in the region by reversing the Obama administration's "pivot" to Asia, withholding U.S. security guarantees unless allies pay



more for their own defense, or advocating nuclear proliferation in the region.

If U.S. partners in Asia decided to hedge, the signs would be obvious. Some of them might invest more in independent military capabilities, with Japan and South Korea, in particular, perhaps seriously considering starting nuclear weapons programs. States might seek to create some sort of regional security organization in which both the United States and China would be members but in which neither would dominate. They might make accommodating statements regarding Chinese maritime claims in the East China and South China Seas and publicly criticize U.S. military deployments. They might attempt to bolster the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' limited security role, and Japan, South Korea, India, and Australia might enhance their security cooperation without involving the United States. Vietnam could undertake a gradual rapprochement with China. Erstwhile U.S. partners, such as Singapore, might even start buying weapons from China and training with its forces. Japan and South Korea might enhance their trilateral strategic dialogue with China on North Korea and other issues. Meanwhile, the momentum behind U.S. partnerships with India, Indonesia, and Vietnam might slow, and Asian states could increasingly resort to ad hoc coalitions of their own to deal with specific regional security problems.

In Europe, U.S. allies would hedge in response to weaker transatlantic ties, eroding U.S. commitments to NATO, or the prospect of a Washington-Moscow condominium that would transform European states into pawns. The continent's big four—France, Germany, Italy, and

the United Kingdom—would likely increase their defense spending and security cooperation, perhaps including Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, too. Some European leaders would start employing Gaullist language, depicting the continent (and perhaps the EU as a body) as a natural balancer between the United States and Russia. Eastern European states could respond to growing vulnerability—and the declining credibility of NATO—by accommodating Russia, rearming their militaries, and reinvigorating the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy. The suddenly vulnerable Baltic states could turn away from the United States and submit to "Finlandization," a more neutral stance that would allow Moscow greater control over their policies. Ukraine, meanwhile, would likely adopt a more conciliatory policy toward Russia, perhaps flirting with membership in the Eurasian Economic Union or with acceptance of its own de facto partition. Turkey, an increasingly tenuous NATO member, would likely try to curry favor with both Russia and the United States, playing off each against the other.

Security hedging in the Middle East would accentuate trends visible during the Obama administration, including waning U.S. influence, an increased Russian presence, and growing rivalry between Iran and Sunni powers (notably Saudi Arabia). Even Israel, whose right-wing government Trump has embraced, would tighten links with Russia as a hedge against U.S. retrenchment. Out of a fear that the United States would prove less willing to check Iran, the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman,



*A friend in need: U.S. soldiers in Zagan, Poland, January 2017*

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) would ramp up their defense spending, enhance their cooperation, and undertake discrete negotiations with Tehran aimed at limiting its worst behavior.

Hedging is less likely in the Americas, given the scale of U.S. dominance. That said, the region's countries could begin to elevate the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which excludes the United States and Canada, above the Organization of American States, which includes them. In sub-Saharan Africa, lastly, little geopolitical hedging should take place, since the region remains a marginal setting for great-power competition, relatively speaking.

### **THE RETURN OF MERCANTILISM**

Economic hedging is inherently different from its geopolitical counterpart. After all, global trade and investment hold the promise of absolute gains for all, and national survival is not immediately at stake. Still, given Trump's campaign pledges to upend the open, liberal system of trade that the United States has promoted since 1945, traditional U.S. trading partners will surely hedge their bets.

Trump has pledged to tear up "horrible" trade deals, including the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership; declare China a currency manipulator; and slap a 45 percent tariff on Chinese imports. If his administration pursues such a

mercantilist course, U.S. trading partners will rightly conclude that the United States is abandoning its global economic leadership and support for open markets. Beyond retaliating against U.S. protectionism and seeking remedies within the dispute-settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization, they could respond to perceived U.S. exploitation in several ways.

Current U.S. trading partners would look to other major economies, particularly China, and blocs, such as the European Union, to become the new motor for the liberalization of global trade. They would likely shift their energies toward alternative arrangements that do not involve the United States—such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, all led by China—to secure more promising markets for goods and fields for investment. U.S. trading partners might well diversify their foreign currency reserves away from dollar holdings and conduct more trade in euros, pounds, yen, and yuan. Emerging economies would redouble their efforts to reduce U.S. influence in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (and openly resist the informal U.S. prerogative to choose the head of the latter body). And developing countries seeking financing would increasingly look to nontraditional donors, such as Brazil, China, India, and the United Arab Emirates.

If the United States abdicates its global economic leadership, it will leave the world economy adrift at a precarious moment. Without a firm hand at the helm, the G-7 group of advanced market democracies could

risk fading into irrelevance. The more inclusive G-20 would look increasingly to Beijing for leadership. The BRICS coalition of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa could find new purpose, particularly if its three emerging-market democracies perceived China as a better economic partner than the United States.

## PLANETARY PERIL

Finally, some countries will hedge against uncertain U.S. leadership when it comes to preserving a sustainable planet. Global warming poses the biggest long-term threat to the survival of the human species. As a candidate, Trump described climate change, which scientists overwhelmingly accept as real and largely man-made, as a “hoax” perpetrated by the Chinese, and he pledged to shred the 2015 Paris agreement, an ambitious emissions-reduction pact.

If the Trump administration does abrogate that agreement, some parties to it will push back, whereas others will simply consider it dead. Many, however, will hedge. Rather than repudiate the accord outright, they will make their own commitments to it more ambiguous. They might extend the deadlines for their own cuts, shift their focus from mitigating climate change to adapting to it, or simply move it down their list of global priorities.

Countries that decided to keep climate change a priority might attempt to force Washington to address the issue regardless by inserting emissions targets and other climate commitments into unrelated pacts, such as ones concerning trade or agriculture. To get the United States to assume some of the cost of the environmental externalities

created by its defection from the climate change regime, they could levy tariffs on U.S. goods based on how much carbon was emitted during their production. They might also engage directly with environmentally minded U.S. states (such as California) or even municipalities (such as New York City) to reach agreements on emissions reductions.

Unlike in the geopolitical and economic realms, hedging on climate change would prove deeply unsatisfactory for the countries that did it, since although they would be avoiding short-term sacrifices, their actions would increase the risk of planetary catastrophe. And because greenhouse gases have a global effect, countries disappointed or alienated by U.S. behavior would have no alternative system with which to align themselves—no climate equivalent to a Chinese-led security order, for instance.

### **TRUMP'S CHOICE**

A future in which other countries hedge as the United States abandons its decades-long leadership is not preordained. Whether it comes to pass will depend on the choices Trump makes as president. If he pivots away from his campaign pledges—in response to the advice of senior advisers, pressure from Congress, or pleas from foreign leaders—his administration could revert to a more standard U.S. grand strategy. But if he makes life riskier for longtime partners—by weakening U.S. alliance commitments, adopting protectionist economic policies, and shirking obligations to combat global warming—U.S. allies and partners will seek to advance their national security, prosperity, and well-being through

increased autonomy. In that case, the Trump administration will find that its attempts to expand the United States' freedom of action and keep others guessing will be met in kind, to the benefit of U.S. rivals and to the detriment of U.S. economic interests and the health of the planet.

That would be an ironic outcome. A leitmotif of Trump's presidential campaign was the need to reduce Americans' vulnerability to international threats and unfair economic competition. And yet the steps Trump has endorsed risk driving away U.S. allies and partners, exposing Americans to global instability and economic retaliation, and accelerating the demise of the world the United States made. 🌐





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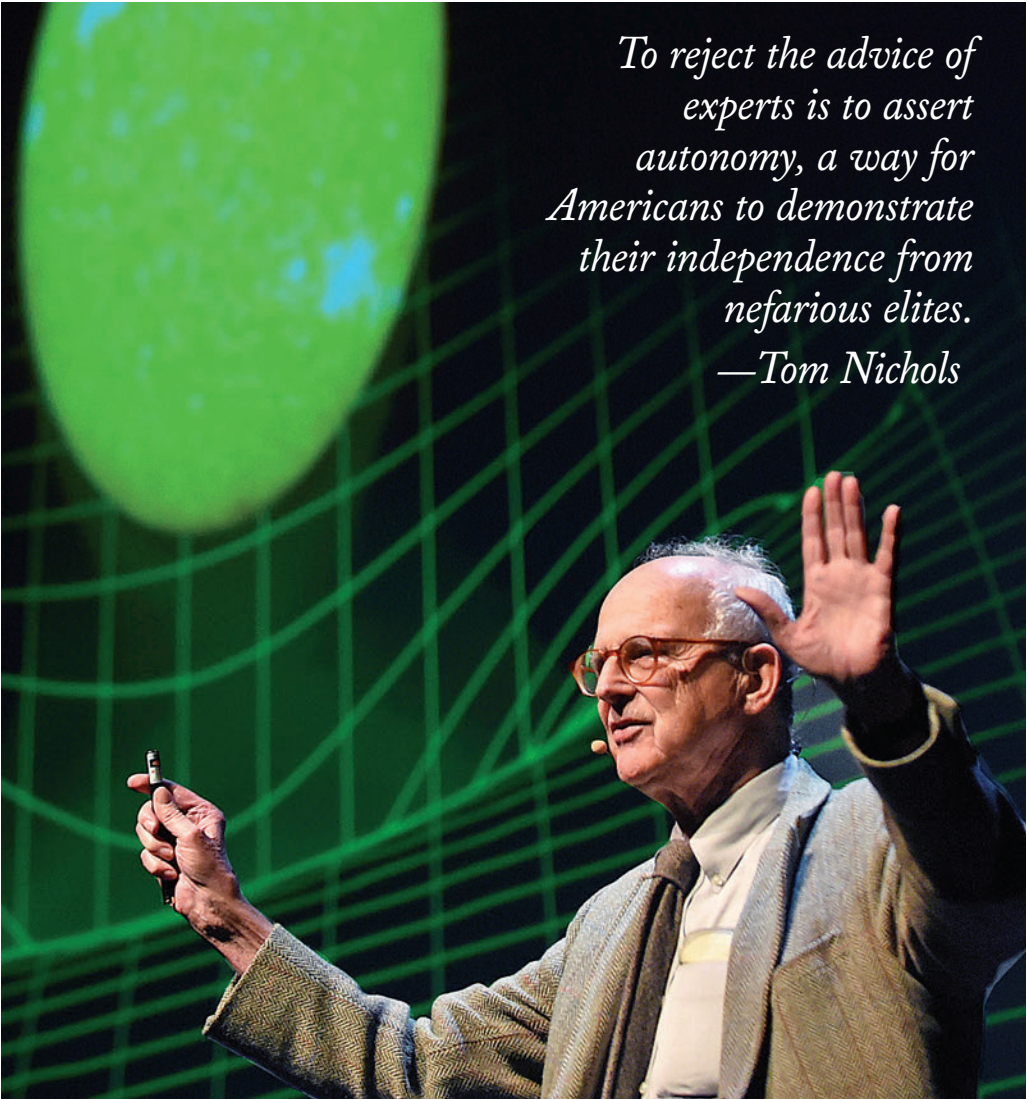
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*To reject the advice of  
experts is to assert  
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Americans to demonstrate  
their independence from  
nefarious elites.  
—Tom Nichols*

How America Lost Faith in Expertise <i>Tom Nichols</i>	60	The Dignity Deficit <i>Arthur C. Brooks</i>	106
Asia's Other Revisionist Power <i>Jennifer Lind</i>	74	The Prisoner Dilemma <i>Holly Harris</i>	118
China's Great Awakening <i>Ian Johnson</i>	83	High Stakes <i>Mark A. R. Kleiman</i>	130
How to Hunt a Lone Wolf <i>Daniel Byman</i>	96	An Internet Whole and Free <i>Kal Raustiala</i>	140

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# How America Lost Faith in Expertise

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## And Why That's a Giant Problem

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*Tom Nichols*

**I**n 2014, following the Russian invasion of Crimea, *The Washington Post* published the results of a poll that asked Americans about whether the United States should intervene militarily in Ukraine. Only one in six could identify Ukraine on a map; the median response was off by about 1,800 miles. But this lack of knowledge did not stop people from expressing pointed views. In fact, the respondents favored intervention in direct proportion to their ignorance. Put another way, the people who thought Ukraine was located in Latin America or Australia were the most enthusiastic about using military force there.

The following year, Public Policy Polling asked a broad sample of Democratic and Republican primary voters whether they would support bombing Agrabah. Nearly a third of Republican respondents said they would, versus 13 percent who opposed the idea. Democratic preferences were roughly reversed; 36 percent were opposed, and 19 percent were in favor. Agrabah doesn't exist. It's the fictional country in the 1992 Disney film *Aladdin*. Liberals crowed that the poll showed Republicans' aggressive tendencies. Conservatives countered that it showed Democrats' reflexive pacifism. Experts in national security couldn't fail to notice that 43 percent of Republicans and 55 percent of Democrats polled had an actual, defined view on bombing a place in a cartoon.

Increasingly, incidents like this are the norm rather than the exception. It's not just that people don't know a lot about science or politics or geography. They don't, but that's an old problem. The bigger concern

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today is that Americans have reached a point where ignorance—at least regarding what is generally considered established knowledge in public policy—is seen as an actual virtue. To reject the advice of experts is to assert autonomy, a way for Americans to demonstrate their independence from nefarious elites—and insulate their increasingly fragile egos from ever being told they're wrong.

This isn't the same thing as the traditional American distaste for intellectuals and know-it-alls. I'm a professor, and I get it: most people don't like professors. And I'm used to people disagreeing with me on lots of things. Principled, informed arguments are a sign of intellectual health and vitality in a democracy. I'm worried because we no longer have those kinds of arguments, just angry shouting matches.

When I started working in Washington in the 1980s, I quickly learned that random people I met would instruct me in what the government should do about any number of things, particularly my own specialties of arms control and foreign policy. At first I was surprised, but I came to realize that this was understandable and even to some extent desirable. We live in a democracy, and many people have strong opinions about public life. Over time, I found that other policy specialists had similar experiences, with laypeople subjecting them to lengthy disquisitions on taxes, budgets, immigration, the environment, and many other subjects. If you work on public policy, such interactions go with the job, and at their best, they help keep you intellectually honest.

In later years, however, I started hearing the same stories from doctors and lawyers and teachers and many other professionals. These were stories not about patients or clients or students raising informed questions but about them telling the professionals why their professional advice was actually misguided or even wrong. The idea that the expert was giving considered, experienced advice worth taking seriously was simply dismissed.

I fear we are moving beyond a natural skepticism regarding expert claims to the death of the ideal of expertise itself: a Google-fueled, Wikipedia-based, blog-sodden collapse of any division between professionals and laypeople, teachers and students, knowers and wonderers—in other words, between those with achievement in an area and those with none. By the death of expertise, I do not mean the death of actual expert abilities, the knowledge of specific things that sets some people apart from others in various areas. There will always be doctors



and lawyers and engineers and other specialists. And most sane people go straight to them if they break a bone or get arrested or need to build a bridge. But that represents a kind of reliance on experts as technicians, the use of established knowledge as an off-the-shelf convenience as desired. “Stitch this cut in my leg, but don’t lecture me about my diet.” (More than two-thirds of Americans are overweight.) “Help me beat this tax problem, but don’t remind me that I should have a will.” (Roughly half of Americans with children haven’t written one.) “Keep my country safe, but don’t confuse me with details about national security tradeoffs.” (Most U.S. citizens have no clue what the government spends on the military or what its policies are on most security matters.)

The larger discussions, from what constitutes a nutritious diet to what actions will best further U.S. interests, require conversations between ordinary citizens and experts. But increasingly, citizens don’t want to have those conversations. Rather, they want to weigh in and have their opinions treated with deep respect and their preferences honored not on the strength of their arguments or on the evidence they present but based on their feelings, emotions, and whatever stray information they may have picked up here or there along the way.

This is a very bad thing. A modern society cannot function without a social division of labor. No one is an expert on everything. We prosper because we specialize, developing formal and informal mechanisms and practices that allow us to trust one another in those specializations and gain the collective benefit of our individual expertise. If that trust dissipates, eventually both democracy and expertise will be fatally corrupted, because neither democratic leaders nor their expert advisers want to tangle with an ignorant electorate. At that point, expertise will no longer serve the public interest; it will serve the interest of whatever clique is paying its bills or taking the popular temperature at any given moment. And such an outcome is already perilously near.

### **A LITTLE LEARNING IS A DANGEROUS THING**

Over a half century ago, the historian Richard Hofstadter wrote that “the complexity of modern life has steadily whittled away the functions the ordinary citizen can intelligently and comprehendingly perform for himself.”

In the original American populist dream, the omniscience of the common man was fundamental and indispensable. It was believed that he could, without much special preparation, pursue the professions and run the government. Today he knows that he cannot even make his breakfast without using devices, more or less mysterious to him, which expertise has put at his disposal; and when he sits down to breakfast and looks at his morning newspaper, he reads about a whole range of vital and intricate issues and acknowledges, if he is candid with himself, that he has not acquired competence to judge most of them.

Hofstadter argued that this overwhelming complexity produced feelings of helplessness and anger among a citizenry that knew itself to be increasingly at the mercy of more sophisticated elites. “What used to be a jocular and usually benign ridicule of intellect and formal training has turned into a malign resentment of the intellectual in his capacity as expert,” he noted. “Once the intellectual was gently ridiculed because he was not needed; now he is fiercely resented because he is needed too much.”

In 2015, the law professor Ilya Somin observed that the problem had persisted and even metastasized over time. The “size and complexity of government,” he wrote, have made it “more difficult for voters with limited knowledge to monitor and evaluate the government’s many activities. The result is a polity in which the people often cannot exercise their sovereignty responsibly and effectively.” Despite decades of advances in education, technology, and life opportunities, voters now are no better able to guide public policy than they were in Hofstadter’s day, and in many respects, they are even less capable of doing so.

The problem cannot be reduced to politics, class, or geography. Today, campaigns against established knowledge are often led by people who have all the tools they need to know better. For example, the anti-vaccine movement—one of the classic contemporary examples of this phenomenon—has gained its greatest reach among people such as the educated suburbanites in Marin County, outside San Francisco, where at the peak of the craze, in 2012, almost eight percent of parents requested a personal belief exemption from the obligation to vaccinate their children before enrolling them in school. These parents were not medical professionals, but they had just enough education to believe that they could challenge established

medical science, and they felt empowered to do so—even at the cost of the health of their own and everybody else’s children.

### **DON’T KNOW MUCH**

Experts can be defined loosely as people who have mastered the specialized skills and bodies of knowledge relevant to a particular occupation and who routinely rely on them in their daily work. Put another way, experts are the people who know considerably more about a given subject than the rest of us, and to whom we usually turn for education or advice on that topic. They don’t know everything, and they’re not always right, but they constitute an authoritative minority whose views on a topic are more likely to be right than those of the public at large.

How do we identify who these experts are? In part, by formal training, education, and professional experience, applied over the course of a career. Teachers, nurses, and plumbers all have to acquire certification of some kind to exercise their skills, as a signal to others that their abilities have been reviewed by their peers and met a basic standard of competence. Credentialism can run amok, and guilds can use it cynically to generate revenue or protect their fiefdoms with unnecessary barriers to entry. But it can also reflect actual learning and professional competence, helping separate real experts from amateurs or charlatans.

Beyond credentials lies talent, an immutable but real quality that creates differences in status even within expert communities. And beyond both lies a mindset, an acceptance of membership in a broader community of specialists devoted to ever-greater understanding of a particular subject. Experts agree to evaluation and correction by other experts. Every professional group and expert community has watchdogs, boards, accreditors, and certification authorities whose job is to police its own members and ensure that they are competent and live up to the standards of their own specialty.

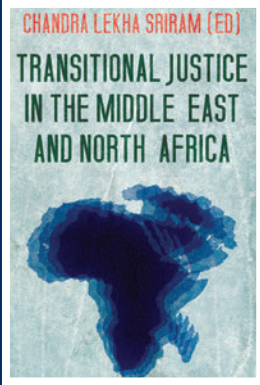
Experts are often wrong, and the good ones among them are the first to admit it—because their own professional disciplines are based not on some ideal of perfect knowledge and competence but on a constant process of identifying errors and correcting them, which ultimately drives intellectual progress. Yet these days, members of the public search for expert errors and revel in finding them—not to improve understanding but rather to give themselves license to disregard all expert advice they don’t like.



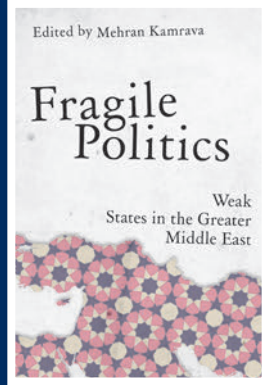
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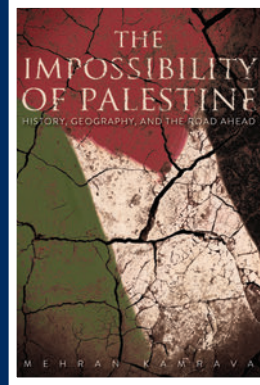
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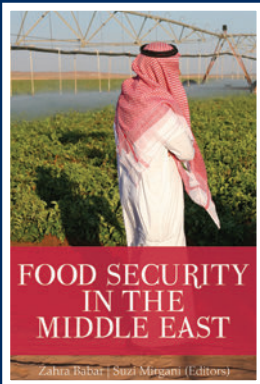
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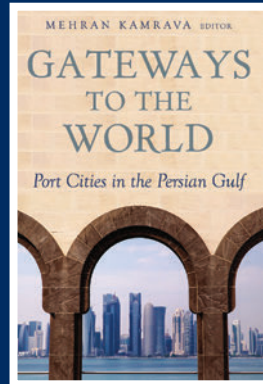
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Lee Kuan Yew  
School of Public Policy



Part of the problem is that some people think they're experts when in fact they're not. We've all been trapped at a party where one of the least informed people in the room holds

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*We are moving toward a Google-fueled, Wikipedia-based collapse of any division between professionals and laypeople.*

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court, confidently lecturing the other guests with a cascade of banalities and misinformation. This sort of experience isn't just in your imagination. It's real, and it's called "the Dunning-Kruger effect," after the research psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger. The essence of the effect is that the less skilled

or competent you are, the more confident you are that you're actually very good at what you do. The psychologists' central finding: "Not only do [such people] reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it." To some extent, this is true of everybody, in the same way that few people are willing to accept that they have a lousy sense of humor or a grating personality. As it turns out, most people rate themselves higher than others would regarding a variety of skills. (Think of the writer Garrison Keillor's fictional town of Lake Wobegon, where "all the children are above average.") But it turns out that less competent people overestimate themselves more than others do. As Dunning wrote in 2014,

A whole battery of studies . . . have confirmed that people who don't know much about a given set of cognitive, technical, or social skills tend to grossly overestimate their prowess and performance, whether it's grammar, emotional intelligence, logical reasoning, firearm care and safety, debating, or financial knowledge. College students who hand in exams that will earn them Ds and Fs tend to think their efforts will be worthy of far higher grades; low-performing chess players, bridge players, and medical students, and elderly people applying for a renewed driver's license, similarly overestimate their competence by a long shot.

The reason turns out to be the absence of a quality called "metacognition," the ability to step back and see your own cognitive processes in perspective. Good singers know when they've hit a sour note, good directors know when a scene in a play isn't working, and intellectually self-aware people know when they're out of their depth. Their less

successful counterparts can't tell—which can lead to a lot of bad music, boring drama, and maddening conversations. Worse, it's very hard to educate or inform people who, when in doubt, just make stuff up. The least competent people turn out to be the ones least likely to realize they are wrong and others are right, the most likely to respond to their own ignorance by trying to fake it, and the least able to learn anything.

### **SURREALITY-BASED COMMUNITY**

The problems for democracy posed by the least competent are serious. But even competent and highly intelligent people encounter problems in trying to comprehend complicated issues of public policy with which they are not professionally conversant. Most prominent of those problems is confirmation bias, the tendency to look for information that corroborates what we already believe. Scientists and researchers grapple with this all the time as a professional hazard, which is why, before presenting or publishing their work, they try to make sure their findings are robust and pass a reality check from qualified colleagues without a personal investment in the outcome of the project. This peer-review process is generally invisible to laypeople, however, because the checking and adjustments take place before the final product is released.

Outside the academy, in contrast, arguments and debates usually have no external review or accountability at all. Facts come and go as people find convenient at the moment, making arguments unfalsifiable and intellectual progress impossible. And unfortunately, because common sense is not enough to understand or judge plausible alternative policy options, the gap between informed specialists and uninformed laypeople often gets filled with crude simplifications or conspiracy theories.

Conspiracy theories are attractive to people who have a hard time making sense of a complicated world and little patience for boring, detailed explanations. They are also a way for people to give context and meaning to events that frighten them. Without a coherent explanation for why terrible things happen to innocent people, they would have to accept such occurrences as nothing more than the random cruelty of either an uncaring universe or an incomprehensible deity.

And just as individuals facing grief and confusion look for meaning where none may exist, so, too, will entire societies gravitate toward

outlandish theories when collectively subjected to a terrible national experience. Conspiracy theories and the awed reasoning behind them, as the Canadian writer Jonathan Kay has noted, become especially seductive “in any society that has suffered an epic, collectively felt trauma.” This is why they spiked in popularity after World War I, the Russian Revolution, the Kennedy assassination, the 9/11 attacks, and other major disasters—and are growing now in response to destabilizing contemporary trends, such as the economic and social dislocations of globalization and persistent terrorism.

At their worst, conspiracy theories can produce a moral panic in which innocent people get hurt. But even when they seem trivial, their prevalence undermines the sort of reasoned interpersonal discourse on which liberal democracy depends. Why? Because by definition, conspiracy theories are unfalsifiable: experts who contradict them demonstrate that they, too, are part of the conspiracy.

The addition of politics, finally, makes things even more complicated. Political beliefs among both laypeople and experts are subject to the same confirmation bias that plagues thinking about other issues. But misguided beliefs about politics and other subjective matters are even harder to shake, because political views are deeply rooted in a person’s self-image and most cherished beliefs. Put another way, what we believe says something important about how we see ourselves, making disconfirmation of such beliefs a wrenching process that our minds stubbornly resist.

As a result, unable to see their own biases, most people simply drive one another crazy arguing rather than accept answers that contradict what they already think about the subject—and shoot the messenger, to boot. A 2015 study by scholars at Ohio State University, for example, tested the reactions of liberals and conservatives to certain kinds of news stories and found that both groups tended to discount scientific theories that contradicted their worldviews. Even more disturbing, the study found that when exposed to scientific research that challenged their views, both liberals and conservatives reacted by doubting the science rather than themselves.

## **WELCOME TO THE IDIOCRACY**

Ask an expert about the death of expertise, and you will probably get a rant about the influence of the Internet. People who once had to turn to specialists in any given field now plug search terms into a Web



browser and get answers in seconds—so why should they rely on some remote clerisy of snooty eggheads? Information technology, however, is not the primary problem. The digital age has simply accelerated the collapse of communication between experts and laypeople by offering an apparent shortcut to erudition. It has allowed people to mimic intellectual accomplishment by indulging in an illusion of expertise provided by a limitless supply of facts.

But facts are not the same as knowledge or ability—and on the Internet, they're not even always facts. Of all the axiomatic "laws"

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*The countless dumpsters of nonsense parked on the Internet are an expert's nightmare.*

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that describe Internet usage, the most important may be the predigital insight of the science fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon, whose eponymous rule states that "90 percent of everything is crap." More than a billion websites now exist. The good news is that even if Sturgeon's cynicism holds, that yields 100 million

pretty good sites—including those of all the reputable publications of the world; the homepages of universities, think tanks, research institutions, and nongovernmental organizations; and vast numbers of other edifying sources of good information.

The bad news, of course, is that to find any of this, you have to navigate through a blizzard of useless or misleading garbage posted by everyone from well-intentioned grandmothers to propagandists for the Islamic State (or ISIS). Some of the smartest people on earth have a significant presence on the Internet. Some of the stupidest people, however, reside just one click away. The countless dumpsters of nonsense parked on the Internet are an expert's nightmare. Ordinary people who already had to make hard choices about where to get their information when there were a few dozen newspapers, magazines, and television channels now face endless webpages produced by anyone willing to pay for an online presence.

Of course, this is no more and no less than an updated version of the basic paradox of the printing press. As the writer Nicholas Carr pointed out, the arrival of Gutenberg's invention in the fifteenth century set off a "round of teeth gnashing" among early humanists, who worried that "printed books and broadsheets would undermine religious authority, demean the work of scholars and scribes, and spread sedition and debauchery." The Internet is the printing press at the speed of fiber optics.

The convenience of the Internet is a tremendous boon, but mostly for people already trained in research and who have some idea what they're looking for. It does little good, unfortunately, for a student or an untrained layperson who has never been taught how to judge the provenance of information or the reputability of a writer.

Libraries, or at least their reference and academic sections, once served as a kind of first cut through the noise of the marketplace. The Internet, however, is less a library than a giant repository where anyone can dump anything. In practice, this means that a search for information will rely on algorithms usually developed by for-profit companies using opaque criteria. Actual research is hard and often boring. It requires the ability to find authentic information, sort through it, analyze it, and apply it. But why bother with all that tedious hoop jumping when the screen in front of us presents neat and pretty answers in seconds?

Technological optimists will argue that these objections are just so much old-think, a relic of how things used to be done, and unnecessary now because people can tap directly into the so-called wisdom of crowds. It is true that the aggregated judgments of large groups of ordinary people sometimes produce better results than the judgments of any individual, even a specialist. This is because the aggregation process helps wash out a lot of random misperception, confirmation bias, and the like. Yet not everything is amenable to the vote of a crowd. Understanding how a virus is transmitted from one human being to another is not the same thing as guessing the number of jellybeans in a glass jar. And as the comedian John Oliver has pointed out, you don't need to gather opinions on a fact: "You might as well have a poll asking, 'Which number is bigger, 15 or 5?' or 'Do owls exist?' or 'Are there hats?'"

Moreover, the whole point of the wisdom of crowds is that the members of the crowd supposedly bring to bear various independent opinions on any given topic. In fact, however, the Internet tends to generate communities of the like-minded, groups dedicated to confirming their own preexisting beliefs rather than challenging them. And social media only amplifies this echo chamber, miring millions of Americans in their own political and intellectual biases.

## **EXPERTISE AND DEMOCRACY**

Experts fail often, in various ways. The most innocent and most common are what we might think of as the ordinary failures of science. Individuals, or even entire professions, observe a phenomenon or

examine a problem, come up with theories about it or solutions for it, and then test them. Sometimes they're right, and sometimes they're wrong, but most errors are eventually corrected. Intellectual progress includes a lot of blind alleys and wrong turns along the way.

Other forms of expert failure are more worrisome. Experts can go wrong, for example, when they try to stretch their expertise from one area to another. This is less a failure of expertise than a sort of

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*Like anti-vaccine parents, ignorant voters end up punishing society at large for their own mistakes.*

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minor fraud—somebody claiming the general mantle of authority even though he or she is not a real expert in the specific area under discussion—and it is frequent and pernicious and can undermine the credibility of an entire field. (I recognize that I myself risk that transgression. But my observations

and conclusions are informed not only by my experience of being an expert in my own area but also by the work of scholars who study the role of expertise in society and by discussions I have had with many other experts in a variety of fields.) And finally, there is the rarest but most dangerous category: outright deception and malfeasance, in which experts intentionally falsify their results or rent out their professional authority to the highest bidder.

When they do fail, experts must own their mistakes, air them publicly, and show the steps they are taking to correct them. This happens less than it should in the world of public policy, because the standards for judging policy work tend to be more subjective and politicized than the academic norm. Still, for their own credibility, policy professionals should be more transparent, honest, and self-critical about their far-from-perfect track records. Laypeople, for their part, must educate themselves about the difference between errors and incompetence, corruption, or outright fraud and cut the professionals some slack regarding the former while insisting on punishment for the latter. As the philosopher Bertrand Russell once wrote, the proper attitude of a layperson toward experts should be a combination of skepticism and humility:

The skepticism that I advocate amounts only to this: (1) that when the experts are agreed, the opposite opinion cannot be held to be certain; (2) that when they are not agreed, no opinion can be regarded as

certain by a non-expert; and (3) that when they all hold that no sufficient grounds for a positive opinion exist, the ordinary man would do well to suspend his judgment.

As Russell noted, “These propositions may seem mild, yet, if accepted, they would absolutely revolutionize human life”—because the results would challenge so much of what so many people feel most strongly.

Government and expertise rely on each other, especially in a democracy. The technological and economic progress that ensures the well-being of a population requires a division of labor, which in turn leads to the creation of professions. Professionalism encourages experts to do their best to serve their clients, respect their own knowledge boundaries, and demand that their boundaries be respected by others, as part of an overall service to the ultimate client: society itself.

Dictatorships, too, demand this same service of experts, but they extract it by threat and direct its use by command. This is why dictatorships are actually less efficient and less productive than democracies (despite some popular stereotypes to the contrary). In a democracy, the expert’s service to the public is part of the social contract. Citizens delegate the power of decision on myriad issues to elected representatives and their expert advisers, while experts, for their part, ask that their efforts be received in good faith by a public that has informed itself enough—a key requirement—to make reasoned judgments.

This relationship between experts and citizens rests on a foundation of mutual respect and trust. When that foundation erodes, experts and laypeople become warring factions and democracy itself can become a casualty, decaying into mob rule or elitist technocracy. Living in a world awash in gadgets and once unimaginable conveniences and entertainments, Americans (and many other Westerners) have become almost childlike in their refusal to learn enough to govern themselves or to guide the policies that affect their lives. This is a collapse of functional citizenship, and it enables a cascade of other baleful consequences.

In the absence of informed citizens, for example, more knowledgeable administrative and intellectual elites do in fact take over the daily direction of the state and society. The Austrian economist F. A. Hayek wrote in 1960, “The greatest danger to liberty today comes from the



men who are most needed and most powerful in modern government, namely, the efficient expert administrators exclusively concerned with what they regard as the public good.”

There is a great deal of truth in this. Unelected bureaucrats and policy specialists in many spheres exert tremendous influence on the daily lives of Americans. Today, however, this situation exists by default rather than design. And populism actually reinforces this elitism, because the celebration of ignorance cannot launch communications satellites, negotiate the rights of U.S. citizens overseas, or provide effective medications. Faced with a public that has no idea how most things work, experts disengage, choosing to speak mostly to one another.

Meanwhile, Americans have developed increasingly unrealistic expectations of what their political and economic systems can provide, and this sense of entitlement fuels continual disappointment and anger. When people are told that ending poverty or preventing terrorism or stimulating economic growth is a lot harder than it looks, they roll their eyes. Unable to comprehend all the complexity around them, they choose instead to comprehend almost none of it and then sullenly blame elites for seizing control of their lives.

### **“A REPUBLIC, IF YOU CAN KEEP IT”**

Experts can only propose; elected leaders dispose. And politicians are very rarely experts on any of the innumerable subjects that come before them for a decision. By definition, nobody can be an expert on China policy and health care and climate change and immigration and taxation, all at the same time—which is why during, say, congressional hearings on a subject, actual experts are usually brought in to advise the elected laypeople charged with making authoritative decisions.

In 1787, Benjamin Franklin was supposedly asked what would emerge from the Constitutional Convention being held in Philadelphia. “A republic,” Franklin answered, “if you can keep it.” Americans too easily forget that the form of government under which they live was not designed for mass decisions about complicated issues. Neither, of course, was it designed for rule by a tiny group of technocrats or experts. Rather, it was meant to be the vehicle by which an informed electorate could choose other people to represent them, come up to speed on important questions, and make decisions on the public’s behalf.

The workings of such a representative democracy, however, are exponentially more difficult when the electorate is not competent to judge the matters at hand. Laypeople complain about the rule of experts and demand greater involvement in complicated national questions, but many of them express their anger and make these demands only after abdicating their own important role in the process: namely, to stay informed and politically literate enough to choose representatives who can act wisely on their behalf. As Somin has written, “When we elect government officials based on ignorance, they rule over not only those who voted for them but all of society. When we exercise power over other people, we have a moral obligation to do so in at least a reasonably informed way.” Like anti-vaccine parents, ignorant voters end up punishing society at large for their own mistakes.

Too few citizens today understand democracy to mean a condition of political equality in which all get the franchise and are equal in the eyes of the law. Rather, they think of it as a state of actual equality, in which every opinion is as good as any other, regardless of the logic or evidentiary base behind it. But that is not how a republic is meant to work, and the sooner American society establishes new ground rules for productive engagement between educated elites and the society around them, the better.

Experts need to remember, always, that they are the servants of a democratic society and a republican government. Their citizen masters, however, must equip themselves not just with education but also with the kind of civic virtue that keeps them involved in the running of their own country. Laypeople cannot do without experts, and they must accept this reality without rancor. Experts, likewise, must accept that they get a hearing, not a veto, and that their advice will not always be taken. At this point, the bonds tying the system together are dangerously frayed. Unless some sort of trust and mutual respect can be restored, public discourse will be polluted by unearned respect for unfounded opinions. And in such an environment, anything and everything becomes possible, including the end of democracy and republican government itself. 🌐

# Asia's Other Revisionist Power

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## Why U.S. Grand Strategy Unnerves China

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*Jennifer Lind*

**D**onald Trump's election as U.S. president threatens to upend the world's most important bilateral relationship. On the campaign trail, Trump promised to label China a currency manipulator and to respond to its "theft of American trade secrets" and "unfair subsidy behavior" by levying a 45 percent tariff on Chinese exports. As president-elect, he reversed four decades of U.S. policy when he spoke by telephone with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and declared that the United States was not bound by the "one China" policy, the diplomatic understanding that has underpinned Washington's approach to Beijing since 1979.

Trump's actions, however, have only compounded deeper problems in the Sino-American relationship. Recent Chinese policies have fueled concerns that the country seeks to overturn the post-Cold War geopolitical order. President Xi Jinping has begun to modernize China's military, gradually transforming the regional balance of power. He has pursued assertive policies in the East China and South China Seas, appearing to reject both the territorial status quo in East Asia and the role of international law in adjudicating disputes. Many observers now believe that efforts to integrate China into the international system have failed and that East Asia will have to contend with a dangerous, revisionist power.

But China is not the only revisionist power in the U.S.-Chinese relationship. Since the end of World War II, the United States has pursued a strategy aimed at overturning the status quo by spreading liberalism, free markets, and U.S. influence around the world. Just as Chinese

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*You started it: Obama and Xi in Paris, November 2015*

revisionism alarms Washington, the United States' posture stokes fear in Beijing and beyond. As Trump begins his presidency, he would do well to understand this fear. The risk of crises, and even war, will grow if Trump introduces instability into areas of the relationship that posed few problems under previous U.S. administrations. But Trump could ease tensions if he pursues a less revisionist strategy than his predecessors.

## **SEA CHANGE**

Chinese policymakers deny that their country is a revisionist power. They claim that China seeks merely to defend a regional status quo that the United States is threatening. After all, they argue, China's claims to many of the region's disputed islands date back centuries. For example, Yang Yanyi, China's ambassador to the European Union, wrote in a 2016 op-ed that China has enjoyed "sovereignty over the South China Sea Island . . . and the adjacent waters since ancient times." Chinese policymakers point out that the "nine-dash line," a demarcation of Chinese claims that runs along the edge of the South China Sea, has appeared on Chinese maps since the 1940s. "China's relevant claims have never exceeded the scope of the current international order," China's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Liu Xiaoming, argued in a 2016 speech criticizing the decision by an international tribunal in The Hague to rule against China in the South China Sea dispute. "China's rejection of the arbitration is to up-



hold the postwar international order,” he said. According to Beijing, the South China Sea has always been, and will always be, Chinese territory; China, in other words, remains a status quo power, not a revisionist one.

But even if its territorial claims are not new, China rarely sought to enforce them until recently. For the past few years, however, China has grown increasingly assertive in its territorial disputes. In 2012, to the dismay of Tokyo and Washington, Beijing declared an “air defense identifica-

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*China, unlike the Soviet Union, does not have a revolutionary ideology.*

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cation zone” over the Senkaku Islands (known in China as the Diaoyu Islands), which are currently controlled by Japan but which China also claims, requiring aircraft flying through the zone to identify themselves to Chinese authorities.

That same year, China maneuvered the Philippines out of Scarborough Shoal—a reef just over 100 miles from the Philippines and more than 500 miles from China. Today, its navy, coast guard, and “maritime militia” of fishing boats deny Philippine vessels access to the area. Meanwhile, China has presided over an extraordinary construction project in the South China Sea, building a string of artificial islands. As the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, a website that monitors activity in the disputed territory, has noted, “The number, size, and construction make it clear these are for military purposes—and they are the smoking gun that shows China has every intention of militarizing the Spratly Islands,” a contested archipelago. China has drilled for oil in the waters of the contested Paracel Islands, ignoring Vietnamese protests and keeping Vietnamese ships away from the area. Last year, China sent a swarm of approximately 230 fishing boats, escorted by coast guard ships, into the waters around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and it has also escalated the situation by sending more powerful military forces into the area, such as a frigate and an air force bomber.

What’s more, over the past few years, China has modernized its military. According to Captain James Fanell, the former chief of intelligence for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, China is building coast guard vessels “at an astonishing rate,” some of which are among the largest coast guard ships in the world. China is also improving its conventional ballistic missiles, which threaten U.S. air bases and ports in the region, including Andersen Air Force Base, on Guam, a crucial U.S. military hub. These moves jeopardize the entire U.S. strategy for projecting power in East Asia.

In the eyes of all but Beijing, this clearly counts as revisionist behavior. And it has touched off a flurry of activity among countries that feel threatened. The Philippines, although possibly moving closer to China under President Rodrigo Duterte, has challenged China's territorial claims in an international tribunal. Australia has strengthened its military and deepened its alliance with the United States. Singapore, not a U.S. treaty ally but a longtime U.S. partner, has increased its defense spending and has begun to work more closely with the U.S. Navy. Despite the legacy of the Vietnam War, Hanoi and Washington have begun to move toward closer security cooperation.

Chinese behavior has also shocked Japan into action. Japanese leaders have rejected military statecraft for more than half a century. But under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan has reinterpreted (and may eventually revise) its constitution to permit more military activism and is forging closer ties with other countries worried about Chinese revisionism, including Australia and India.

So far, Japan's response to China has been restrained. Although changes in the Japanese defense posture often generate alarmist headlines, Japan's actions to date have been modest, especially when compared with how great powers normally behave when confronted by a rising power in their neighborhood. The Japanese public is preoccupied with a lagging economy and an aging society; it has no interest in military statecraft and has disapproved of the security reforms pushed by Abe and other conservatives. But as the world's third-largest economy, Japan has tremendous latent power; a sufficiently alarmed Tokyo could decide to increase its military spending from the current one percent of GDP to two or three percent—an undesirable outcome for Beijing.

Chinese officials argue that U.S. interference has caused its neighbors to respond with alarm, but China's own revisionism is to blame. Consider that for the past 60 years, even as Washington constantly entreated Japan to play a more active military role in the U.S.-Japanese alliance, Tokyo stepped up only when it felt threatened, as it did in the late 1970s when the Soviet Union launched a military buildup in Asia. Today, Japan is responding not to U.S. pressure but to Chinese assertiveness. Beijing must understand how threatening its actions appear if it wishes to successfully manage its relations with its neighbors and with Washington.

## **POT, MEET KETTLE**

Like their Chinese counterparts, U.S. foreign policy officials argue that the United States seeks merely to uphold the status quo in East Asia. They want to maintain military predominance in the region through the policy of a “rebalance” to Asia, prevent a return to an era when countries settled disputes unilaterally and by force, and support freedom of navigation and the law of the sea.

In its desire to preserve the current global economic system and its network of military alliances, the United States does favor the status quo. But at its heart, U.S. grand strategy seeks to spread liberalism and U.S. influence. The goal, in other words, is not preservation but transformation.

After World War II, the United States formed a network of partners, supported by military alliances and international institutions, and sought to expand it. Prosperity and peace, created through trade and institutions, would prevail among the members of the liberal zone. As democracy and economic interdependence deepened, and as the zone widened, war would become less likely and respect for human rights would spread. Washington sought to pull countries into its orbit, regardless of whether they accepted its values. In time, perhaps engagement with the United States and with the liberal order would encourage the spread of liberalism to those countries, too. “The West was not just a geographical region with fixed borders,” the scholar G. John Ikenberry has written. “Rather, it was an idea—a universal organizational form that could expand outward, driven by the spread of liberal democratic government and principles of conduct.”

The strategy, to be sure, had elements of self-interest: Washington sought to create a liberal order that it itself led. But it also had a more revolutionary goal: the transformation of anarchy into order.

The United States has pursued this transformational grand strategy all over the world. In Europe, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States and its allies did not preserve the status quo. Instead, they pushed eastward, enlarging NATO to absorb all of the Soviet Union’s former Warsaw Pact allies and some former Soviet territories, such as the Baltic states. At the same time, the European Union expanded into eastern Europe. In Ukraine, U.S. and European policymakers encouraged the overthrow of a pro-Russian government in 2014 and helped install a Western-leaning one.

In the Middle East, U.S. policymakers saw the 2003 invasion of Iraq as an opportunity to advance democracy in the region. During the





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Arab Spring, they viewed the uprising in Libya as another chance to replace an anti-American dictator, and they encouraged the spread of democracy elsewhere as well. Underlying the United States' recent engagement with Iran is a desire to promote liberalization there, too.

In East Asia, the United States has not only maintained and strengthened its longtime alliances with Australia, Japan, and the Philippines but also courted new partners, such as Malaysia and Singapore. And with its policy toward Vietnam, the United States may encourage a dramatic change in the regional status quo. Historically, Vietnam, which borders China, has fallen within its larger neighbor's sphere of influence, and since the Vietnam War, its relations with the United States have been bitter. In the past few years, however, Vietnam and the United States have deepened their economic ties, resolved previous disputes, and even explored greater security cooperation. Vietnam is also expanding its military ties with U.S. allies—namely, Australia, Japan, and the Philippines.

In each of these regions, U.S. diplomatic, economic, and military policies are aimed not at preserving but at transforming the status quo. “A country is one of three colors: blue, red, or gray,” the Japanese journalist Hiroyuki Akita said in 2014 at a talk at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, in Tokyo. “China wants to turn the gray countries red. The Americans and Japanese want to turn the gray countries blue.” No one, in other words, is trying to preserve the status quo. U.S. foreign policy elites might object to Akita's blunt assessment and often dismiss the notion of “spheres of influence” as outdated, Cold War-era thinking. But the U.S. goal is to replace the old-fashioned competition for spheres of influence with a single liberal sphere led by the United States.

## **IN OR OUT?**

China, of course, does not stand entirely outside the liberal international system. China has become the world's second-largest economy in large part by embracing some features of liberalism: it is now a top trading partner of many countries, including, of course, the United States. And China has gained greater influence in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The country both profits from and—increasingly, by virtue of its wealth, talent, and expertise—contributes to the liberal order.

Yet in several key respects, China remains outside that order. Its military modernization and regional assertiveness challenge U.S. pri-

macy in Asia and the principle that countries should resolve territorial disputes through peaceful adjudication. Although China has introduced significant economic reforms, many observers question its support for liberal economic development. Beijing argues that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a Chinese-led international development bank, will uphold good governance and environmental protection. Yet Beijing could well renege on those promises.

China is clearly an outsider in the realm of human rights. The Chinese Communist Party maintains its grip on power through the threat and use of force. It harasses, arrests, and tortures political activists and suspected enemies, and it represses secessionist groups, such as the Mongolians, the Tibetans, and the Uighurs. Under Xi, the government has cracked down even more harshly on domestic dissent. As a 2015 Human Rights Watch report put it, the Chinese leader has “unleashed an extraordinary assault on basic human rights and their defenders with a ferocity unseen in recent years”; in 2016, the nongovernmental organization declared that “the trend for human rights . . . continued in a decidedly negative direction.”

China also obstructs its liberal partners’ efforts to promote human rights across the globe. In the 1990s, for example, China opposed UN intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, arguing that the West should respect national sovereignty. And regarding Syria, China has vetoed multiple UN Security Council resolutions calling for a political solution.

For illiberal countries, the inherently transformational nature of U.S. grand strategy appears deeply threatening—something U.S. foreign policy elites too often fail to recognize. NATO expansion, for example, provoked deep consternation in Moscow. As the political scientist Joshua Itzkowitz Shiffrin has noted, “Western scholars and policymakers should not be surprised that contemporary Russian leaders resent the United States’ post–Cold War efforts and are willing to prevent further NATO expansion—by force, if necessary.” U.S. and European efforts to encourage Ukraine to join NATO and the EU menaced Russia, and Russian President Vladimir Putin lashed out. This is not to excuse Putin’s military aggression; he had other choices. But NATO members’ inability to see how the expansion of their alliance threatened Russia represented a serious failure of strategic empathy.

In East Asia, adding Vietnam to the list of U.S. regional partners—or even allies—would seem to follow naturally from a strategy of spreading democracy and free markets and might insulate a liberalizing Vietnam

from the coercive influence of its powerful neighbor. But a U.S. alliance with Vietnam would represent a dramatic departure from the status quo, and China would see it as such. U.S. foreign policy analysts sometimes invoke the benefits of closer U.S. relations with Hanoi without mentioning how threatening this development would appear to Beijing, which could react in a similar way toward Vietnam as Russia did toward Ukraine. U.S. policymakers should not automatically defer to China and Russia. But to understand the real tradeoffs of a given policy, they need to take into account how these great powers will likely react.

### **A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP?**

One can argue that the United States' transformational strategy has had, and will continue to have, a profoundly positive effect on the world. Or one can argue that it is simply a manifestation of self-interested U.S. expansionism. It's hard to argue, however, that U.S. policy has sought to support the status quo.

Proponents of the post-World War II U.S. grand strategy might argue that there is no reason to adjust it now. They might insist that challenges from China and Russia demand, if anything, a stronger U.S. commitment to spreading liberalism. According to this view, the United States should strengthen its security commitments in eastern Europe and extend new ones there. In Asia, the United States should strengthen its existing alliances, align itself more closely with Vietnam, and clarify its commitment to defend Taiwan.

By contrast, realist critics might caution that as the global balance of power changes, so must U.S. grand strategy. A transformational approach may have made sense in the 1990s: it allowed the United States and its liberal partners to gain ground when China and Russia posed little threat. Today, however, China's rise and Russia's resurgence make this strategy too provocative. In this view, Washington must be wary of a growing risk of great-power conflict and, because all three countries possess nuclear weapons, potentially catastrophic escalation. These critics would have Washington prioritize great-power stability over its transformational goals.

The best way forward is a compromise between the approach of the liberal internationalists and that of the realists. Washington should continue to look for opportunities to promote liberalism, but it should do so through less threatening policies and in regions where its actions are less likely to have strategic repercussions for U.S. relationships with



some of the world's most powerful countries. For example, the United States can support the building of institutions and civil society in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia and the Middle East without threatening the core interests of other great powers. U.S. policymakers should be wary of extending alliances to the borders of China or Russia or attempting to advance democracy within those countries. The United States can encourage liberalism while acknowledging that its grand strategy appears deeply threatening to outsiders.

If Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, had won the presidential election, the United States would probably have continued to pursue its transformational strategy. It is much less clear, however, how Trump's presidency will shape U.S. grand strategy and U.S.-Chinese relations. On the one hand, the Trump administration could prove deeply destabilizing. Trump's phone call with the Taiwanese president, for example, has introduced real uncertainty about U.S. policy toward Taiwan, potentially shattering a delicate compromise that has held for four decades. If the Trump administration pokes sticks into more areas where previous U.S. and Chinese governments have forged compromises, it will preside over a deterioration of an already troubled relationship.

But Trump could also reduce tensions if he proves less assertive about promoting liberalism than the liberal internationalists who have presided over U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Although Trump has not outlined his views on grand strategy, he seems less concerned with transforming the world's political system and more interested in making good bilateral deals for the United States. So Trump, caring little about promoting further liberalization in Asia, might dismiss an alliance with Vietnam, a weak nation embroiled in a territorial dispute with a great power, as a bad deal. If Trump's pragmatism makes him more willing than liberal internationalists to compromise, his leadership could prove stabilizing in this respect.

For years, foreign policy analysts in the United States, Japan, and Europe took heart from at least one reassuring factor in U.S.-Chinese relations: China, unlike the Soviet Union, does not have a revolutionary ideology. Beijing has not tried to export an ideology around the world.

Washington has. In attempting to transform anarchy into liberal order, the United States has pursued an idealistic, visionary, and in many ways laudable goal. Yet its audacity terrifies those on the outside. The United States and its partners need not necessarily defer to that fear—but they must understand it. 🌐



## Rebuilding Tomorrow

**A**s an innovator in a wide range of industries, Japan has exported its game-changing technologies and expertise to the rest of the world. However, over the past two decades, its economy has experienced sluggish growth. Maintaining its position as the third's largest economy, Japan continues to find new ways in creating economic boost.

"As the Japanese government works on a wide range of policies aimed at stimulating economic growth, the ACCJ has offered policy prescriptions that encourage further reform and growth in Japan," said Christopher LaFleur, President of the Ameri-

we look forward to working with them on a number of issues that will make Japan an even more promising place to do business," said LaFleur.

In the past, Japan faced fierce competition as an investment destination with the rise of mainland China, Hong Kong and Singapore. High costs, an aging society and a language barrier did not help Japan's goal to attract more foreign investment.

"These negative perceptions are old concepts. As for business costs, the average office rent in Tokyo is lower than in Singapore and Hong Kong. According to an OECD survey, labor costs in Tokyo are actually lower than that of major developed countries," said Hiroyuki Ishige, Chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the main agency tasked to promote inbound foreign direct investment (FDI) in order to strengthen international collaboration and drive economic growth.

To increase FDI, JETRO works in coordination with the government to improve the business environment by helping to simplify regulations and establish rules for corporate governance.

"We want to give a unified message that Japan has changed and is open for business," stressed Ishige.

Amid the government's

determined efforts to jumpstart the economy, with FDI pouring into Japan and Japanese companies seeking more investment opportunities abroad, the country's law firms have begun to strengthen their presence around the world.

Atsumi & Sakai (A&S), a full-service firm with overseas offices in London and

Frankfurt, caters to Japanese companies expanding abroad, as well as foreign companies entering Japan.

"People are saying the Japanese market is shrinking, but we can see that it is still expanding in certain industries such as pharmaceutical, healthcare and renewable energy. In addition,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



**Japan External Trade Organization Chairman Hiroyuki Ishige**

can Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reiterated that his top priority continues to be economic growth, with accelerating Abenomics being key. Introduced in 2012, Abenomics is a set of economic policies combining aggressive fiscal spending, monetary policy, and structural reform.

### Open for business

"The ACCJ appreciates all the hard work done by the Japanese government and

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# Rebuilding Tomorrow

Internet of Things and artificial intelligence have also been hot topics in Japan," revealed A&S Managing Partner Hiroo Atsumi.

To assist the influx of foreign investors penetrating the Japanese market, A&S in partnership with Tricor K.K., launched a "One-Stop Japan FDI Support Service" in 2016.

"Our motto is 'a compass to find your way.' With our experience, we can better assist companies in establishing themselves locally and internationally," said Atsumi.

## Tourism: new economic pillar

With Japan hosting the Olympics and Paralympics in 2020, the Japanese government hopes to reinvigorate the country's overall economy with the expected deluge of

tourists.

"The government has focused on tourism for economic growth. By making tourism an economic pillar, the government hopes to utilize the industry as a driver of local revitalization," said JTA Commissioner Akihiko Tamura.

Having reached its target of 20 million annual visitors four years early, Japan has set a new target of 40 million by 2020. To increase the effectiveness of its campaign, JTA and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) have partnered with several industry-related organizations.

"In 2003, the 'Visit Japan' campaign was launched. And that was the beginning of the increased importance of tourism in the country," said JNTO President Ryoichi Matsuyama.

Recently, JNTO and JTA

launched major campaigns to promote the diversity of Japan's attractions outside the "Golden Route" of Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto and highlight the country's year-round beauty, unique festivals, and distinct cuisine.

To further encourage travel outside the Golden Route, the government and the private sector have upgraded its airports, raised the number of hotel rooms, increased English signage and trained more tourism professionals.

Contributing to national efforts to facilitate stress-free travel, Orient Corporation (Orico), a provider of various payment settlement services, is assisting towards the creation of a cashless economy in Japan by Tokyo 2020.

"Extensive infrastructure development and collabora-



**ZEAL Cosmetics CEO Osamu Maeda**

tion with every local shop are needed for such cashless settlement. Having a cashless society will greatly help stimulate local economy," explained Orico President Masaaki Kono. "I believe we are the only consumer finance company in Japan that has a business base in every single prefecture. With

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this advantage, we have a role to play in contributing to local economy revitalization."

Tokyo 2020 hopes to show the world how Japan will successfully stage a sustainable Olympic Games and display its unique position as the crossroads of traditional culture and leading-edge technology.

### New generation cosmetics

Incorporated in 2011 by CEO Osamu Maeda, ZEAL Cosmetics, in cooperation with Prof. Yasuhiro Tsukamoto, introduced antibody-based skin care products to the world.

The mass production of antibodies involves extracting durable, heat-resistant, high reactive antibodies from unfertilized ostrich eggs. ZEAL utilizes this method to also make agriculture, food, and household products, among others.

ZEAL is a vital partner in the global battle against infectious diseases such as Zika, MERS and flu viruses (including bird flu) as it provides effective preventative care against these diseases.

"We are always open to new strategic business partners in all industries to create long-term goals in each market to solve real problems in each geographic region, with a focus on the United States in 2017," said Maeda. "We have been working with the Better Future Foundation in providing our antibody technology to protect underprivileged children from infectious diseases around the world." ■

# Healing the country and the world

With more than 25 percent of its population being 65 years of age or older, Japan has the world's largest aging population. This number is expected to rise to 33 percent by 2030 as the country's fertility rate remains below replacement level.

While various problems arise from Japan's demographic challenges, their medical technology and healthcare industries have found solutions to the problems of its elderly population. While some of these difficulties are unique to Japan, other countries will face similar issues in the near future.

"So far, we have developed medical devices fit for Japanese patients' body size and diseases. Because we have the basic technology and manufacturing knowhow, in the future, we can establish centers in different parts of the world and research which devices would be most fit for the people living in those countries," said Tokai Medical Products (TMP) Chairman and Founder Nobumasa Tsutsui.

TMP, which dominates the domestic market, produces high-quality catheters with a wide range of applications, such as cardiovascular, abdominal and neurological intervention.

"We have a new product that saves newborn babies' lives," said Tsutsui. "Some babies have problems with the pulmonary valves in their hearts that allow them to live only for limited terms. This congenital disease occurs in a very small number of patients; and the development of products for newborn babies is very difficult because we have to develop the smallest catheter in the world—only 0.3 mm in diameter. Yet, we did it."

After finding success in Japan with the launch of this niche product, TMP sees the need to tap into the global market, supplying

its device to as many countries as possible in order to help as many babies as possible.

"Our company is not after profit. What we are trying to do is provide good things for the patients and make people happy. We want to save lives. And I believe that's the reason why our company is growing," said Tsutsui.

From medical equipment to cosmetics, a wide variety of companies, such as medical information provider MRT, Inc. has found success in the domestic market and have seen the opportunity to go global.

"In terms of remote services and technology, there are several companies around the world equipped with similar technology. But MRT is the first company that has applied this to the medical field in Japan," said MRT President and Founder Toshimasa Baba.

"Japan is at the forefront of an aging population. But 10 to 20 years down the line, there will be many other countries confronted with this dilemma. So our business model will be applicable to other countries around the world in the future. We hope our business would be helpful in coping with the problem," Baba added. ■



**Tokai Medical Products plays a huge role in saving millions of lives around the world.**

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# Raising global standards in manufacturing

Japan's prowess lies in many fields, and the Japanese are undoubtedly masters at making things.

The Japan Electrical Manufacturers' Association (JEMA) has overseen the development of the electrical machinery industry for nearly 70 years. JEMA was formed in 1948 out of a need to rebuild Japanese industry following the Second World War. Ever since, the 280-strong organization has supported the growth of its industry by ensuring that its members adapt to worldwide trends and remain globally competitive.

"We saw the need to improve the entire electrical industry. Instead of each company working single-handedly, we decided to have an association to assist the members, from suggesting important policy changes, meeting international standards, enlightening people about product safety and exchanging information foreign electrical machinery organizations," said JEMA President Kiyoshi Ebizuka.

While Japanese electrical machinery companies try to boost their domestic market, Ebizuka stressed that Japanese



From its production base in Nagano, SANYO DENKI produces standard-setting electrical components and systems.

electrical machinery companies have thrived around the world.

Embodying Japan's reputation as a trailblazer in manufacturing, SANYO DENKI has remained one of the world's top manufacturers of electrical components and systems, which include cooling fans, universal power systems and servo systems.

"We strive to compete on performance; and that is why we are ahead. We have a very good reputation with our current and even potential customers, and that is because we help them focus on features and not only on price," said CEO Shigeo Yamamoto.

With more than 90 years of experience, SANYO DENKI develops core technologies used in high-performing standard products and creates customized ones based on each customer's application.

"With different markets having varying demands, our technical centers worldwide gather information from each region and collaborate with the main R&D center in Japan. Through this, we maintain competitiveness. Also, we are

currently integrating IoT (Internet of Things) technologies into our products," Yamamoto explained.

Apart from gathering information for R&D, SANYO DENKI's overseas technical centers also provide technical support and after-sales service.

A designer and manufacturer of power transmission equipment, Miki Pulley has also carved its niche by catering to the specific needs of its clients and focusing on developing its own technologies.

"It's not about just customizing products," CEO Koji Miki pointed out. "Even in the design, we develop this together with our clients. Our strength is in engineering. We have the facilities and the engineers that our clients don't have. That is how we offer solutions."

Meanwhile, Tamura Corporation, among Japan's oldest companies in the electrical market, ensures that proper support is provided to its customers worldwide.

"One of our biggest advantages is that we have a number of manufacturing locations in Asia, Europe and the U.S. So, our global customers can

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always get support," explained President Naoki Tamura.

For Miki Pulley and Tamura Corporation, an increased international presence is important for its long-term future.

"Currently, we are targeting the industrial and infrastructure markets in the US, EU, India, China and Brazil. Mergers and acquisitions would be the strategy for us all over the world to expand our business. As we are committed to understanding the local markets we are in, we hope to find good people there and work with them," Tamura said.

But for Miki Pulley, its expansion strategy involves forming partnerships or setting up its own sales offices.

"The subsidiaries that we have were all set up five or six years ago. We have been in the business for a long time but we realized that we could not grow further if we do everything from Japan," Executive Vice President Yuji Miki said.

The Japanese have also acquired a reputation as early

adapters, particularly in safety standards and environmental friendliness. These two qualities have remained priorities for SOC Corporation, a maker of low voltage fuses.

"As a last line of safety defense for multiple applications, the fuse is a very important component. Our responsibility is huge and we always try to meet the technical and specific needs of our customers because this is also our chance to grow and expand and because this helps us maintain our status as the fuse manufacturer with the world's best technology," said President Kayoko Ari-kawa.

Already present in Asia, Europe and the United States, SOC Corporation has identified the automotive and renewable energy industries as potential growth markets.

Japanese manufacturers gained the admiration of its partners and the loyalty of its clients, at home and abroad, for their ability to capitalize on its several strengths and to fur-

ther improve them. While this has prompted Japanese companies to expand overseas, others, such as Japan Material and NASCO Nakamura, have focused on growth opportunities that exist at home.

Japan Material, which focuses on providing technical support for semiconductor factories, also offers in-house preventive maintenance for its customers as part of the whole package. Its clients include the world's largest companies in the semiconductor industry from Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan.

However, President of Japan Material, Hisao Tanaka, admits that Japan's semiconductor industry has lost its leading position and must do more to regain its standing.

"I've been in the industry for years and I've seen Japan's semiconductor industry at its peak. In recent years, other countries have taken over the field. Japan staggered a little because although the country has high quality, it has

high prices too. We are eager to help Japan bring the semiconductor industry back to the top. It has been before. We can do it again," Tanaka said.

NASCO Nakamura, a pioneer in food processing and packaging solutions, believes that Japan, its main market, will still set the standards in innovation and be the point of reference for countries around the world.

"We are currently supplying the packaging solutions for food sold in convenience stores, which is really popular in Japan. In the near future, the demand for this in other countries will increase," said President Gotaro Nakamura.

"Other countries will soon experience the same shifts in demographics and economy that Japan is now experiencing. By that time, Japanese companies like us will have gained enough know-how to lead in other markets, especially in Asia, with our acquired techniques," Managing Director Hidemune Nakamura added. ■



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# Japanese universities find solutions to global problems



**Like Momoyama Gakuin, Japan's universities are steadfast in its mission to raise a new breed of global students.**

Facing tough challenges, such as an aging population and a shrinking workforce, Japan is seen as one of the first countries to encounter problems that will beset other developed economies. The situation has brought about an opportunity to find solutions and to propose new growth models for the rest of the world to follow.

Japanese universities play a key role in this task and are well aware of their influence on policy-making.

"We have to be attentive to global changes and what cur-

rent society is faced with. We have to create solutions for existing problems and show new options. Japanese universities have to take in good practices from all over the world and adapt them to Japanese society," said Toyota Technological Institute President Dr. Hiroyuki Sakaki.

Becoming aware of the importance of having a global outlook, TTI sends one-third of its graduate students on internships abroad. "For our graduates to serve as the next techno-industrial leaders, we let our students think about global missions and international opportunities," he added.

Yokohama National University President Yuichi Hasebe shares similar beliefs. Established in 1876, YNU has formulated solutions to problems faced by the cosmopolitan city and its prefecture, Kanagawa, by integrating multi-disciplinary and cross-border knowledge.

"We do particularly well in IT. I plan to further strengthen our studies in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences so we have a wider inter-

disciplinary approach. We also want to collaborate with our counterparts in China, India and other fast-growing economies in Asia," Hasebe explained.

Another school in the city, Yokohama City University, is committed to educating global citizens by expanding its student exchange program, particularly with partners in Asia and Europe. Currently, YCU has 38 partner institutions from around the world. As part of its long term goal, YCU plans to focus on establishing more partnerships with universities in Asia.

While the international exposure will help its students in their future careers, YCU also hopes that the knowledge gained abroad by students will contribute to the city's development, especially in the fields of medicine and science.

"At the same time, we also want to invite more international students to come to Japan. YCU is an attractive school as it is ranked second by Times Higher Education among small universities in Japan," said YCU President Yoshinobu Kubota.

To fulfill its goal of increasing

outbound and inbound students, YCU has set up the International Academic Consortium for Sustainable Cities (IACSC) in 2009, to continue establishing relationships with more universities and institutions.

Even specialized Japanese universities, such as Showa University and St. Marianna University School of Medicine, cannot ignore the importance of internationalization.

Showa University, one of Japan's top comprehensive medical universities, started its foreign exchange programs nearly 40 years ago. But, especially in the last five years the school has aggressively promoted student exchanges to satisfy its students' demand.

"Although there was a decline in Japanese students going abroad, we see that the interest is increasing again recently. A large portion of our students want to study abroad, so we are working hard to establish memoranda of understanding with universities," said Showa University President Royehi Koide. Currently, Showa University's international reach includes 28 institutions in 15 countries, including the United States, Madagascar and Egypt.

The university also has a post-graduate fellowship program that allows young medical professionals (doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses) and researchers to receive free additional training in Japan. This program also offers free housing and, for about half of the fellows, a monthly stipend. In the last 35 years, over 900 international research fellows have participated in the program.

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**Toyota Technological Institute (TTI)**  
**豊田工業大学・Toyota Kogyo Daigaku**

TTI is a small but unique college of engineering. Born in Nagoya in 1981 with the support of Toyota Motor Corporation, TTI admits only 90 students each year.

Its mission is to conduct quality education and research of global excellence, as well as hand down the creative spirit of Sakichi Toyoda (1867-1930), an inventor of automatic looms and the founder of Toyota Group.

TTI works in close collaboration with its sister institute, TTI at Chicago (TTI-C), which focuses on computer science.

"We want to share our techniques and technology to future leaders who can educate other medical practitioners around the world. Fellows may go back to their home country to share knowledge they have acquired. As it is open to everybody, the program also helps us gauge the medical level and culture of many countries and learn from them. With this, we hope to cultivate the next generation of leaders," Koide also said.

Meanwhile, in the last six years, St. Marianna University School of Medicine began foreign exchange programs with universities and institutions in China, Korea and the United States. Chairman Katsuya Akashi hopes to increase the number of partner schools in the next few years.

"We are actually searching for more universities to communicate with. We hope to send our students anywhere in the world to gain experience as long as it's safe," Akashi said.

Apart from expanding its

international partnerships, the university is also internationalizing its curriculum.

"With the encouragement of MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), we saw the need to match our curriculum according to global standards.

Although our knowledge and skills are up to par, work still needs to be done in relation to breaking language barriers in order to collaborate more easily with other parts of the world," explained Akashi.

Despite the drive to globalize, Japanese universities have not abandoned their roots as they see themselves as emissaries of a country with a unique culture and timeless values that can benefit the world.

In March 2015, 23 Momoyama Gakuin University students visited the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles and the University of California-Irvine as part of the university's KAKEHASHI Project.

"They prepared a presenta-

tion designed to help others understand the real Japan. *Kakehashi* means 'a bridge connecting to the world' and our students try to be the link between Japan and other countries," explained Momoyama Gakuin University President Dr. Ninako Makino.

Momoyama Gakuin University also has outreach programs that promote Japanese goodwill.

"We have various programs that help local communities at home and abroad. For example, some of our students visit rural Indonesia to help local people build new homes, while others go to Inner Mongolia to assist in tree-planting to hold back desertification. Here in Japan, some students have provided aid following earthquakes, while others use their business management skills to support local women farmers," Makino said.

For the head of Tokyo International University, the mission of promoting Japanese values is a priority. Chancellor No-

buyasu Kurata pays special attention to instilling *kotokushin* or civic-mindedness among the students.

"Six years ago when the big earthquake hit Japan, we did not see people storming the stores and stealing from one another. Instead, people came to serve and help one another. This I believe is because of *kotokushin*. Instead of competition and fierce rivalry, everyone thinks of harmony and contributing to society," Kurata said.

"This philosophy is very important. It is meant to defy barriers, whether they be of race, religion or gender. This will help nurture our students to become truly internationally minded leaders," he added.

Along with several universities in Japan, TIU welcomes students from all parts of the world.

Kurata said, "It is our sincere hope that students who come to study at TIU will learn our philosophies, and go back and work for international communities as global leaders." ■

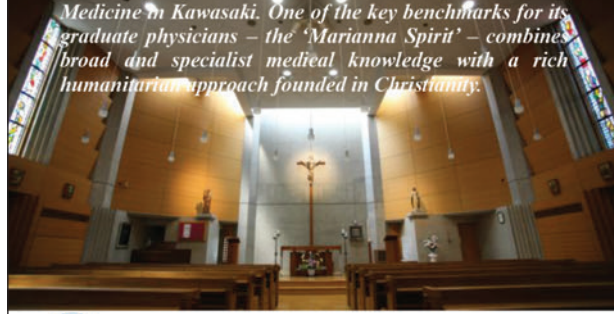



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*Dignity of life rooted in love for all mankind is the core philosophy of St. Marianna University School of Medicine in Kawasaki. One of the key benchmarks for its graduate physicians – the 'Marianna Spirit' – combines broad and specialist medical knowledge with a rich humanitarian approach founded in Christianity.*

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Among Japan's top-ranking private comprehensive medical universities, Showa University has four schools (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences) and four research centers. It runs eight teaching hospitals and two clinics located throughout Tokyo and Yokohama, wherein students from its schools acquire valuable bedside training and clinical practice.

For more than 50 years, Showa University has operated a fully equipped campus located close to the iconic Mt. Fuji. To build the early foundations of team-based medicine, all freshmen from its four schools live and study together in dormitories in this campus. In the Times Higher Education rankings in 2016, Showa University was No.4 in student-to-staff ratio.

Since 1982, Showa University has run a research fellowship program for foreign-trained medical specialists who seek free training in Japan for up to one year. The program has since accepted more than 900 international fellows from 58 countries.





## Fostering "Citizens of the World"

Momoyama Gakuin University (St. Andrew's University) was founded in Osaka, Japan, in 1959. Our educational principle is to foster "citizens of the world" through Christian humanism.

In addition to their regular courses, many Momoyama students participate in our overseas programs, including language study and volunteer activities as well as business internships. Moreover, 70-80 international students, from more than 20 different countries and areas, come to Momoyama to study each year. Momoyama offers rich opportunities for intercultural experience, alongside the opportunity to contribute to the world.

The University President



Dr. Ninako MAKINO  
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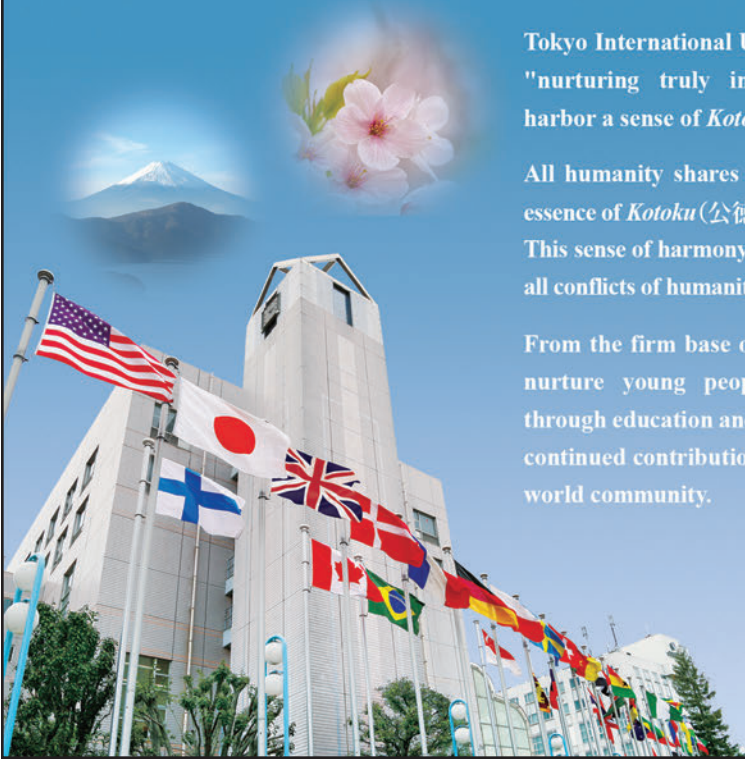
Tokyo International University is wholeheartedly committed to "nurturing truly internationally-minded individuals" who harbor a sense of *Kotokushin* (公德心), or "unbiased harmony".

All humanity shares values that derive from *Kotokushin*. The essence of *Kotoku* (公德) is symbolized by *Wa* (和), or "harmony". This sense of harmony that is upheld in Japanese virtue surpasses all conflicts of humanity.

From the firm base of our university's 51 years of history, we nurture young people from the international community through education and research instilled with *Kotokushin* as our continued contribution towards an ever-endurable world community.



Tokyo International University  
Chancellor and Chair,  
Nobuyasu Kurata



[www.tiu.ac.jp](http://www.tiu.ac.jp)

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# China's Great Awakening

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## How the People's Republic Got Religion

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*Ian Johnson*

**F**or decades, outsiders have thought of China as a country where religion and faith play marginal roles. Images of Chinese people overwhelmingly involve economics or politics: massive cities sprouting up, diligent workers laboring in vast factories, nouveaux riches flaunting their wealth, farmers toiling in polluted fields, dissidents languishing in prison. The stories about faith in China that do exist tend to involve victims, such as Chinese Christians forced to worship underground or groups such as Falun Gong being repressed by the government.

Such images fail to fully capture the reality of present-day China, where hundreds of millions of people are consumed with doubt about their society and are turning to religion and faith for answers they cannot find elsewhere in their radically secular society. They wonder what makes a good life and if there is more to it than material gain. As a 42-year-old pastor of a church in the western metropolis of Chengdu told me recently, “We thought we were unhappy because we were poor. But now a lot of us aren’t poor anymore, and yet we’re still unhappy. We realize there’s something missing, and that’s a spiritual life.”

Across China, hundreds of temples, churches, and mosques open every year, attracting millions of new worshippers. The precise figures are often debated, but even a casual visitor to China cannot miss the signs: new churches dotting the countryside, temples being rebuilt or massively expanded, and even new government policies that encourage traditional values. Faith and values are returning to the center of a national discussion over how to organize Chinese life.

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**IAN JOHNSON** has reported from and written about China for *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Review of Books*, among other publications. This essay is adapted from his forthcoming book, *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion After Mao* (Pantheon, 2017). Copyright © Ian Johnson, 2017.

China's ethnic minorities—especially Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims—have long valued religion, sometimes as a form of resistance against an oppressive central state. But a similar or even stronger move toward spiritualism is emerging among Han Chinese, the ethnic group that makes up 91 percent of the country's population. A search for deeper meaning is no longer just a salve for China's marginal people, but a major preoccupation of the same Chinese who have benefited the most from their country's economic takeoff.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that China is undergoing a spiritual revival similar to the Great Awakening that took place in the United States in the nineteenth century. Then, as now, a country on the move has been unsettled by great social and economic change. People have been thrust into densely populated cities where they have no friends and no support systems. Religion and faith offer them ways of looking at age-old questions that people everywhere struggle to answer: Why are we here? What really makes us happy? How do we achieve contentment as individuals, as a community, as a nation?

This burst of religious and spiritual activity poses risks for the Chinese Communist Party. But China's leaders have also benefited from it, and have even encouraged and fostered it in some ways. So far, the party has managed a delicate balance, tolerating the spiritual awakening without overreaching or provoking a dangerous backlash. But as Beijing pursues a new, harder line on social, economic, and political change, this equilibrium may become harder to maintain.

## **OLD-TIME RELIGION**

Understanding the spiritual revival in contemporary China requires a detour back in time to its cause: one of history's greatest antireligious movements. Contrary to what many people assume, this campaign did not originate with the Communist takeover of China in 1949. Instead, it began a century earlier, when China's traditional civilization began to collapse.

China's decline in the nineteenth century triggered a crisis of confidence. For most of its history, China had dominated its neighbors. At times, some were militarily stronger, especially the nomadic peoples to its north, such as the Mongols and the Manchus. But even when those groups got the upper hand and conquered China, the Chinese rarely doubted the superiority of their culture. They were often self-critical, but they believed that their way of life would prevail.

China's encounter with the West shook that self-assurance. China suffered a string of military defeats that began with the First Opium War of 1839–42, during which British forces defeated the Qing dynasty. As the century progressed, many Chinese looked around the world and saw how the West had carved up Africa and the Americas and had subjugated India. By the end of the nineteenth century, a growing number of Chinese had come

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*A burst of religious and spiritual activity poses risks for the Chinese Communist Party.*

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to believe that their country needed to change if it were to survive. China lacked modern science, engineering, education, public health, and advanced agricultural methods. All these things were products of the West's dramatically different way of ordering society, which was based primarily on science rather than religion and tradition.

As China's crisis deepened, increasingly radical ideas took hold. China didn't just need new policies, or even a new dynasty. Reformers wanted to overthrow the entire imperial political establishment, and that meant destroying the religious system that undergirded it. Understanding why requires one to envision how traditional Chinese society was organized. Religion was not an institution separate from secular society, and religious practice was not something Chinese people engaged in once or twice a week, at a certain place, under the guidance of a particular holy book. Chinese religion involved little theology and almost no clergy. But this didn't mean Chinese religion was weak. Instead, it was diffused over every aspect of life—a fine membrane that held society together. The country had an estimated one million temples around the turn of the century, with many villages home to half a dozen places of worship.

The prominence of faith in China has also long been masked by the complexity of religious identity among the Chinese. People today tend to think in exclusive terms about religion: this person is Catholic, that person is Jewish, that one is Muslim. "What faith do you believe in?" seems like a simple question for people who define religion according to monotheistic norms. But for most of Chinese history, this sort of question would have sounded strange. In China, religion has historically been more about community than identity. Each village had at least one temple where residents honored a certain god on certain holy days. For most of its history, China had three main religious



teachings, or *jiao*: Buddhism (*fojiao*), Confucianism (*rujiao*), and Taoism (*daojiao*)—but they largely did not function as separate institutions with their own followers. Instead, people believed in an amalgam of these faiths that is best described simply as “Chinese religion.”

What mattered more than religious labels or identities were rituals, which helped organize Chinese society. In imperial China, the central bureaucracy was relatively small, and most officials sent to the provinces by Beijing made it only to the county seat, which meant that one person oversaw hundreds of villages and tens of thousands of people. Local life was run by committees headed by local grandees, and the most important committee was the one that ran the local temples. These bodies often managed other projects as well, such as building irrigation systems or raising militias to fight off bandits. Temples also provided a physical space for government rule: they were often the places where local elders met, read proclamations, and carried out punishments. In the words of the historian Prasenjit Duara, temples were Chinese society’s “nexus of power.”

But religion offered more than practical assistance in running imperial China; it was the political system’s lifeblood. The emperor was called “the Son of Heaven” and presided over elaborate rituals that underscored his semidivine nature. That is why when reformers and revolutionaries set out to re-create China in the late nineteenth century, they started with religion. To build a new political and cultural system, they first had to demolish the old one.

## **BORN AGAIN**

At around the same time that reformers were beginning their assault on Chinese religion, a foreign faith—Christianity—was gaining traction and exerting a subtle but powerful influence. By the late sixteenth century, Christianity had secured a foothold in China, but it remained a minor phenomenon until missionaries began to arrive in the nineteenth century as a result of China’s defeat in the Opium Wars. Unlike Islam, which had entered China a millennium earlier but was largely confined to the country’s periphery, Christianity began to spread in China’s economic heartland and among its most influential classes. This caused a great deal of angst: one popular saying at the time was “One more Christian, one less Chinese.”

But Christianity held a powerful appeal for modernizing reformers who often looked to the West for inspiration and were impressed by



*Come to Jesus: at an underground Catholic church in Tianjin, November 2013*

the religion's apparent compatibility with modern states there. Some reformers, including the Nationalist Party leader Chiang Kai-shek, even converted to Christianity. But most important was the decision by almost all Chinese modernizers to adopt what they saw as a Protestant-style distinction between religion and superstition. They concluded that only religious practices that resembled Christianity were “real” and should be allowed to survive; the rest were mere superstitions and should be banished.

The religious cleansing that followed unfolded haphazardly, often through individual actions. A telling example involves Sun Yat-sen, who would eventually help overthrow the Qing dynasty and establish the Republic of China in 1912. One of his first acts of rebellion involved storming into the local temple in his hometown in Xiangshan County and smashing its statues. When Sun's Nationalist Party took power, the pace of change picked up, and Chiang, who succeeded Sun in 1926, launched the New Life Movement to cleanse China of its old ways. Along with trying to eradicate opium abuse, gambling, prostitution, and illiteracy, the Nationalists launched a “campaign to destroy superstition.” In the period between the end of imperial rule and the Communists' victory in the civil war in 1949, half of the one million temples that had dotted China at the turn of the century were destroyed, shuttered, or converted to other uses.

## **FAITH NO MORE**

Following their takeover, China's Communists initially handled religion as they did other noncommunist elements of society, through co-optation. The party set up associations for the five groups that had emerged out of the wreckage of the old system: Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants. These five were allowed to run their surviving temples, churches, and mosques. Everything was firmly guided by the party, but religion wasn't banned.

That system lasted only a few years. In the late 1950s, Mao Zedong began to suppress most religious activity, and by the time he launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Chinese Communist Party had begun one of the most furious assaults on religion in world history. Virtually every place of worship was closed, and almost all clergy were driven out. In the Catholic stronghold of Taiyuan, in Shanxi Province, the central cathedral was turned into a "living exhibition" to demonstrate the backwardness of religion: its priests and nuns were held in cages, and local residents were ordered to troop by and observe them. Across the country, Buddhist, Taoist, and Catholic clerics who had taken vows of chastity were forced to marry. Family shrines were dismantled. Temples were gutted, torn down, or occupied by factories or government offices; zealous Maoist cadres pitched the temples' sacred statues into bonfires or smuggled them to Hong Kong to be sold off through antiques dealers. (This is one reason why so many temples in China today lack the great works of art that characterize ancient places of worship elsewhere around the world.)

In response to such repression, religion went underground. Churchgoers began meeting in secret, and Buddhists and Taoists tried to save their scriptures and ritual manuals by burying them or committing them to memory. Authorities forbade the open practice of physical forms of spiritual cultivation, such as meditation and many martial arts. In public, the only form of worship the party allowed to thrive was the cult of Mao. People wore Mao badges, clutched his book of sayings like a sacred text, and traveled to his hometown of Shaoshan as if on a pilgrimage. Some people even prayed to Mao, asking for his instructions in the morning and reporting back to him in the evening. Much of this fervor was coerced; a failure to show sufficient revolutionary fervor could result in prison or death. But especially among young people, the phenomenon was real—an ecstatic outpouring of emotion, an ersatz religion for a country that had destroyed its own.

# Maxwell

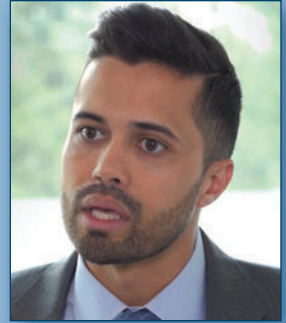
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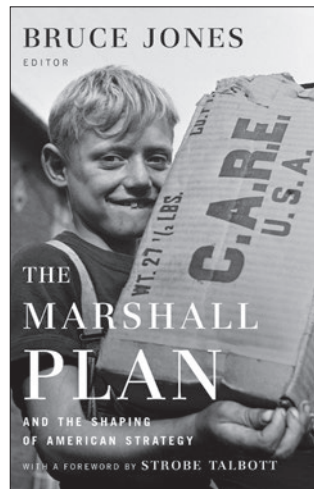
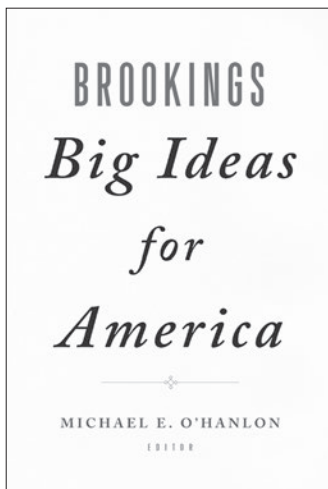
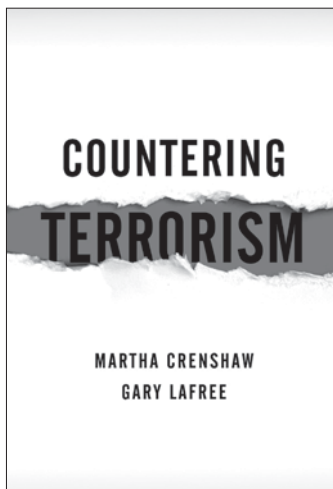
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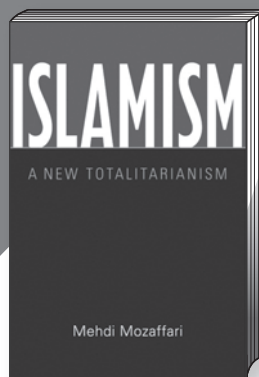
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## **THE GOD THAT FAILED**

There was one problem with Mao as a living god: he died. When that happened, in 1976, the country went into shock. Some people were thrilled—finally, the tyrant was gone—but many were crushed. Tears flowed, and the country ground to a halt. With traditional religion decimated and Mao dead, people were unsure how to channel their hopes and fears.

The party responded by trying to turn the clock back to the early 1950s. In 1982, as part of a more general accounting of the destruction wrought by the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party issued a 20-page paper titled “The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country’s Socialist Period.” Better known as Document 19, it featured an astoundingly candid analysis of China’s religious crisis—and provided the legal basis for the religious revival now under way. The document stated that for 19 of Mao’s 27 years in power, “leftist errors” took hold—a surprising admission of how badly the party had fumbled religious policy during its first three decades in power. It conceded that Maoist radicals had “forbade normal religious activities,” “fabricated a host of wrongs and injustices that they pinned upon these religious personages,” and “used violent measures against religion that forced religious movements underground.” The document went on to describe religion in sympathetic language, arguing forcefully that it would disappear—but only very gradually. In the meantime, the party’s policy would be “respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief.” Places of worship could reopen, and a new generation of clergy could receive training.

The approach described in Document 19 has more or less guided the party ever since. As a result, China is no longer the bastion of godless communism that many foreigners still imagine. However, that hardly means that religion is not a source of severe tension in Chinese society. People of faith intensely resent the government’s control of major temples, churches, and mosques, and many have turned to underground places of worship. In the public sphere, religion remains tightly circumscribed. It is all but banned from the media; religious leaders, for example, almost never comment on the great issues of the day, or even interact with one another. Interreligious dialogue is all but unknown.

The turmoil of the past century and a half has also made people uncomfortable about expressing their religiosity. In fact, most peo-

ple shun the word “religion” (*zongjiao*), which is still seen as a sensitive term. This results in colossal misunderstandings when outsiders try to gauge religious or spiritual life in China. In 2014, for example, the Pew Research Center issued a major study on global views about religion that reported that in China, only a startling 14 percent of respondents believed that morality was linked to belief in religion. In 2015, a WIN/Gallup International poll reported that 61 percent of Chinese identified as atheists, far higher than the worldwide average of just 11 percent.

These studies were flawed, however, because they asked people whether they believed in a *zongjiao*. (Other translation issues ultimately led Pew to reissue its report with China removed altogether from the findings.) It is much more useful to ask Chinese people

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*There was one problem  
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about how they act or whether they believe in specific ideas. In a 2007 survey of 3,000 Chinese conducted by British and Chinese researchers, 77 percent of respondents said they believed in moral causality, or *baoying*, a key pillar of tra-

ditional Chinese belief. This is the idea that you reap what you sow—what you do in this life has repercussions in the next. Forty-four percent agreed with the statement “Life and death depends on the will of heaven,” and 25 percent said they had experienced the intervention of a “Buddha” (*fo*) in their lives during the past 12 months, meaning that a god or spirit had influenced their lives.

Other surveys have also managed to capture the scope of the religious surge. A 2005 poll carried out by East China Normal University, in Shanghai, found that 31 percent of the country’s population, or about 300 million people, were religious. Around 200 million Chinese adhered to Buddhism, Taoism, or folk practices such as worshipping one’s ancestors or deified historical figures, such as famous generals or medical doctors. The poll also found that around 60 million or so Chinese were Christians. The main reason for the poll’s high religious response rate was that the researchers used the word *xinyang*, or “faith,” instead of *zongjiao*. Another study, led by the scholar Fenggang Yang of Purdue University in 2007, reached similar conclusions: it found that 185 million Chinese considered themselves to be Buddhist and another 17.3 million had formal ties to a temple (making them the equivalent of lay Buddhists). As for Taoism, it found that 12 million

considered themselves to be Taoist and another 173 million engaged in some Taoist practices.

The most obvious signs of China's religious revival are the growing number of places of worship and the expanding population of clergy. A government survey from 2014 found half a million Buddhist monks and nuns in some 33,000 Buddhist temples and another 48,000 Taoist priests and nuns affiliated with 9,000 Taoist temples—twice the number of temples reported in the 1990s. That might seem like impossibly fast growth, but it matches what I have personally observed in dozens of cities across China. Even in Beijing, the most politicized and atypically atheistic city in China, the number of Taoist temples has increased from just two in 1995 to more than 20 today. That is still a fraction of the hundreds that existed in the past, but the growth indicates the speed of change.

As for Christianity, the picture is bifurcated. For a host of reasons, Catholicism remains the weakest and least influential of China's five official religions. Even if one accepts upper-end estimates of 12 million adherents, that is still less than one percent of the population. Protestantism, by contrast, took off after 1949 and is often described as the fastest-growing religion in China. Official figures show that 20 million Protestants belong to government-run churches, a massive increase from one million in 1949. Almost all independent estimates, however, suggest that the true number of Protestants is far higher, especially because of the popularity of underground, or "house," churches, which are not part of the government-run structure. In 2008, the Chinese sociologist Yu Jianrong estimated that Protestants number between 45 million and 60 million; in 2011, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life put the figure at 58 million. Whatever the precise number, the fact is that Protestantism has become a dynamic part of China's religious landscape, especially in its biggest cities and among its best-educated people.

## **THE LOST MIDDLE**

The Chinese Communist Party has kept a close eye on this explosion of religious sentiment and practice and has made sure that no one mistakes its modest liberalization for complete freedom of religion. Underground activities might be tolerated but are still illegal. So, too, are ties with foreign religious organizations—a taboo that often leads to persecution.



The most significant instance of official repression took place in 1999, when the government banned the spiritual movement Falun Gong, which authorities saw as a challenge to the government. When Falun Gong refused to disband, a crackdown followed. Human rights groups estimate that about 100 practitioners died in police custody, and thousands were incarcerated without trial, many spending years in labor camps.

However severe it was, the suppression of Falun Gong may have created space for other religious organizations. Since the crackdown, the government has loosened its policy toward the five established religions, perhaps feeling that it is better to allow religiosity to be channeled into groups that it can control rather than see it erupt in independent movements. The government has shown particular favor toward Taoism, folk practices, and most forms of Buddhism.

Groups with foreign ties have fared less well, including Tibetan Buddhists who emphasize their ties to the exiled Dalai Lama, Muslims inspired by global Islamic movements, or Christians who look abroad for guidance and leadership—hence a recent campaign that saw the removal of crosses from the spires of churches in one heavily Christian part of the country. But religious organizations that are led and financed from within China have been granted considerable leeway.

And yet authorities also fear faith as an uncontrollable force—an alternative ideology to the government's vision of how society should be run. In the past, state and religion were united, forming a spiritual center of gravity for China. That old system is now gone, and nothing new has taken its place. The situation has been complicated by a roiling debate within the ruling Communist Party about how to best govern the country. With no clear course, China percolates with ideas and saviors but has no system to hold it all together. As the historian Vincent Goossaert and the sociologist David Palmer describe it, today's China is "a Middle Kingdom that has lost its Middle."

## **CHURCH AND STATE**

China's religious revival has become a bellwether for broader changes in Chinese society. When Mao died and moderates took over in the late 1970s, they tried to rebuild the regime's credibility

among the population by loosening control. Their goal was to push economic development and let people do much as they pleased as long as they did not challenge party rule. During this reform period, which lasted for about 30 years, until roughly 2010, observers believed, or at least hoped, that this relaxation would continue indefinitely and result in a freer society. This was an optimistic period around the world; when the Cold War ended, it seemed that societies were moving inexorably toward freedom and democracy. During much of this period,

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*The government has tried hard to co-opt religious groups instead of crushing them.*

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Chinese society did become increasingly free. Part of this process was led by the government; following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist Party concluded that reforms and openness could actually strengthen their grip on power by creating more prosperity and thus dampening opposition.

But in recent years, the government has changed course. Perhaps because leaders feel that further liberalization could threaten their rule, they have begun to take a harder line. Critics, even moderate ones, have been locked up; the Internet has been brought to heel; and social movements have been instructed to obey the government or face suppression. A period of stasis has set in.

In the field of religion and faith, the government has tried hard to co-opt groups instead of crushing them. It has cleverly tapped into the phrases and some of the ideas of the traditional political-religious state that ran China for more than two millennia. These trends toward control are likely to continue: the state will never fully yield its grip on the country's moral life.

The winners will likely be China's traditional religions: Buddhism, Taoism, and folk religion. Seeing them as easier to manage, the state will give them more space, even while making sure they follow government policies. This does not mean that China will become like Russia, with its nationalist Orthodox state church. Nor will the Chinese Communist Party morph into something like India's Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), which advocates a nationalist-religious agenda. The Chinese Communist Party enjoys a higher degree of support, so it doesn't need to resort to the blatant instrumentalization of religion. Instead, like the imperial

dynasties of the past, it will continue to push acceptable forms of faith as a way to strengthen its position as the arbiter of the nation's moral and spiritual values.

### **FAR FROM HEAVEN**

If one had to summarize the collective aspirations of the Chinese people in one word, it would be “heaven” (*tian*), a concept that is central to how the Chinese conceive of a well-ordered society. *Tian* implies a form of justice and respect and suggests an authority higher than any one government.

But aspiring to *tian* does not always lead to political dissent. Throughout the decades of communist rule, China has had dissidents, including inspiring figures such as the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo. But by and large, these activists and their pursuit of universal rights have left ordinary Chinese people cold. Most Chinese see political activists as well meaning but unrealistic. When ordinary people have pursued political change, their goals have been fairly narrow: farmers protesting unfair taxation or city residents opposing the destruction of their homes. Their motivations were personal and rarely part of an overarching ideology or a yearning to change the system.

The new desire for spiritual transformation is deeper and more profound than such expressions of dissatisfaction. All religious and spiritual movements have self-interested goals, but they also offer systematic critiques of the status quo. It is true that faith can be an escape from politics, a pietistic flight from a chaotic society: “Most people aren’t trustworthy, but at least my church/my temple/my pilgrimage society is filled with good people.” And yet faith can also inspire social action. It is no coincidence that among Chinese human rights lawyers—a group currently suffering from intense state repression—one finds a disproportionate number of Christians, or that other activists have found inspiration in Buddhism and Taoism.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as the scholar Richard Madsen documents in his book *Democracy’s Dharma*, faith-based Buddhist and Taoist charities played a significant role in democratizing Taiwan. Something similar is unlikely to happen on the mainland in the near term. The Communist Party has made clear that it will not permit non-governmental organizations—religious or secular—to be set up and

organize. Religious groups have been limited to providing services—disaster relief, for example—and have been hindered in pursuing broader goals, such as trying to reform society. But seen from a wider historical perspective, religious organizations are helping lay the groundwork for a broader transformation.

Out of this ferment, China is becoming more than a hypermercantilist, fragile superpower. It is a country engaging in a global conversation about how to restore solidarity and values to societies that have made economics the basis of most decisions. Perhaps because Chinese religious traditions were so savagely attacked over the past decades and then replaced with such a naked form of capitalism, China might actually be at the forefront of this worldwide search for values. These are universal aspirations, and like people elsewhere in the world, many Chinese people believe that their hopes are supported by something more than a particular government or law. They believe they are supported by heaven. 🌐



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# How to Hunt a Lone Wolf

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## Countering Terrorists Who Act on Their Own

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*Daniel Byman*

**I**n the last two years, “lone wolf” jihadists seemed to emerge as the new face of terrorism. In December 2015, husband and wife Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik attacked a Christmas party held by Farook’s employer, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, killing 14. In June 2016, Omar Mateen killed 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida—the deadliest attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. And in July, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel drove a truck through a Bastille Day celebration in Nice, killing 86 people. The attacks by the San Bernardino killers, Mateen, and Bouhlel followed an increasingly common pattern: the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) claimed credit for them, but the perpetrators appear to have planned and executed their operations alone.

Analysts traditionally define a lone wolf as a terrorist who is not part of a group or directed by an outside organization. In reality, few lone wolves truly act alone: Farook and Malik were a married couple, and some security officials believe that Bouhlel had been in contact with suspected extremists in his neighborhood. Nevertheless, the label is important: terrorists who act without external guidance pose a different threat, and call for a different policy response, than do those who are directed by an extremist group.

Lone wolves are an old problem, but in recent decades, the number of attacks by them has grown. And it won’t fall anytime soon: ISIS has embraced the tactic, and recent successes may well inspire copycats. And although lone wolves usually kill few people, they have an outsize

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political impact. In both the United States and Europe, they are fueling Islamophobia, isolating Muslim communities, and empowering populist demagogues.

Although lone-wolf attacks are hard to prevent, governments in the West can do several things to make them less likely and to prepare for those that do occur. First, they should work to keep lone wolves isolated. Terrorists are far more likely to succeed if they can coordinate with others, especially if they have the help of an organized group, such as ISIS. Second, governments should build strong relationships between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies. The friends, family, and neighbors of would-be terrorists are more likely than the security services to know if something is amiss, so governments must gain their trust. This will mean giving security officials the flexibility to intervene in ways that do not involve jail sentences, such as by allowing them to supervise individuals without arresting them. Third, governments should direct security services to monitor and infiltrate jihadist social media accounts, and encourage private companies to shut them down, to identify individual terrorists and disrupt their communications. Finally, and most important, governments should try to discredit the ideology embraced by lone wolves. Yet doing all

these things would only reduce the lone-wolf threat, not end it. It is impossible to stop every violent individual from picking up a gun and shooting.

### **AN OLD PROBLEM**

Today, the lone wolves who get the most attention are Islamist extremists, but since the threat began, such attackers have emerged from fanatical movements of all stripes. In 1995, the white supremacist Timothy McVeigh launched the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil before 9/11 when he bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 and wounding hundreds more. In 2010, James Lee, who mixed environmental activism with anti-immigrant sentiment, took three people hostage in Maryland. Dylann Roof, a white supremacist, murdered nine African American parishioners at a historically black church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015.

Groups usually encourage lone wolves when they are too weak to carry out organized attacks themselves. In 1983, the American white supremacist Louis Beam called for “leaderless resistance” to the federal government. Traditional groups with tight command and control “are easy prey for government infiltration, entrapment, and destruction,” Beam wrote, so small groups and individuals should work independently. Over a decade ago, the jihadist fighter and theorist Abu Musab al-Suri encouraged lone-wolf attacks for the same reason. He pointed out that jihadists had lost hundreds of fighters when they confronted U.S. forces in large groups during the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The solution, Suri argued, was to rely on “single operations . . . carried out by individuals or small groups.”

Beam and Suri’s logic is catching on. In 2012, the sociologist Ramon Spaaij found that from 1970 to 2010, the number of lone-wolf attacks per decade grew by 45 percent in the United States and by over 400 percent across 14 other developed countries, although the absolute numbers remained low. And since ISIS gained strength in 2014, the West has seen another increase. In July 2015, Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez killed five people at a military recruitment center and a U.S. Navy Reserve base in Tennessee. In September 2016, lone wolves executed two separate plots. Ahmad Khan Rahami allegedly planted two bombs in New York City and one in New Jersey—one went off in Manhattan but did not kill anyone. On the same day in Minnesota, Dahir Adan stabbed and injured ten people at a mall. And in November, Abdul

Razak Ali Artan, a legal permanent resident of the United States who was a refugee from Somalia, rammed his car into a group of his fellow students and faculty and staff members at Ohio State University and stabbed several more before a security guard shot him dead. Europe has seen even more attacks, with strikes in Tours, Lyon, and Copenhagen. Both the United States and Europe saw roughly twice as many successful lone-wolf attacks in 2015 and 2016 as they did from 2011 to 2014.

Although the overall trend is clear, experts struggle to identify precise numbers, as the boundary between lone wolves and coordinated attackers is unclear. When it comes to affiliation with a group, terrorists exist on a spectrum. At one end lie established organizations. The 2015 Paris attacks, for example, in which terrorists killed 130 people, involved a relatively large network of individuals operating in Belgium and France. ISIS fighters had trained many of them in Syria, and the group's leadership coordinated the operation. At the other end of the spectrum lies someone such as Ted Kaczynski, the so-called Unabomber, who killed three people and injured more than 20 others during a 17-year campaign of mail bombings. Kaczynski lived alone, had no ties to any organized group, and formulated his own agenda.

Individuals such as the San Bernardino killers or Mateen lie closer on the spectrum to the Unabomber than to the Paris attackers, but they were not totally isolated. Although such attackers act alone, they all still feel some connection to a broader cause. The lectures of the U.S.-born al Qaeda ideologue Anwar al-Awlaki inspired the San Bernardino killers, for example, and although they had no direct contact with ISIS, during the attack they pledged loyalty to the group's leader (whose name they had looked up on the Internet only that day). Closer to the organized end of the spectrum was Nidal Hasan, who in 2009 killed 13 people in a shooting rampage at Fort Hood, in Texas. Hasan drew inspiration from Awlaki's teachings but also exchanged e-mails with the preacher, in which the two discussed jihad (although they did not plan any particular attack).

## **THE NEW NORMAL?**

The increase in lone-wolf attacks has been driven in part by ISIS' embrace of the tactic. For most of its history, ISIS focused on Iraq and Syria. It did call for attacks in the West in 2014, but most of its propaganda urged supporters to immigrate to the areas under the group's control,



where they could defend and expand the state and live life as virtuous Muslims under ISIS' just rule. In early 2016, however, an ISIS spokesman declared that "the smallest action you do in the heart of [the West] is dearer to us than the largest action by us and more effective and more damaging." ISIS made this shift because attacks by the U.S.-led coalition have shrunk its territory in Iraq and Syria and eroded its ability to carry out large-scale operations. The group is short of funds and having a tougher time recruiting foreigners. Like all terrorist groups, ISIS needs victories to inspire new recruits and maintain morale among the existing cadre. Lone-wolf attacks can provide at least a few victories.

New technologies have also contributed to the lone-wolf phenomenon. Back when Beam and other white supremacists were urging individuals to carry out attacks, they were trying to promote their ideas and give their effort overall coherence by disseminating a few printed tracts. The Internet, particularly since the rise of social media, has put that process on steroids. Now even small groups can spread their ideas far and wide. Young Muslims all over the West need only search Google to read or listen to the words of ideologues such as Awlaki.

Perhaps most worrisome, lone-wolf attacks seem to be entering the broader cultural imagination in the West, providing a template to violence-prone misfits who might otherwise not have acted on their murderous impulses. Put another way: people who might not have the means, opportunity, or even desire to actually join a terrorist organization might nevertheless come to see lone-wolf attacks as an appealing way to express their rage. Consider that many recent lone-wolf attackers were not longtime adherents to radical ideas. Rather, they seem to have been people who were searching for meaning in their lives and who found it by committing spectacular violence in the name of a movement—without having invested the time and energy it would have taken to actually join the movement in a more committed way or having borne the associated risk.

## **PROS AND CONS**

As Beam, Suri, and other proponents of lone-wolf attacks have argued, governments find it fiendishly difficult to stop them. To break up most terrorist plots, officials monitor communications to identify and locate the associates of known suspects. Lone wolves, however, have few previous connections to known terrorists and rarely communicate with them.

Lone wolves are also cheap. They are usually untrained, and they finance themselves, so a group can take the credit for free. The wider a group spreads its ideology, the larger the supply of cheap attacks. Lone wolves also allow a terrorist group to claim responsibility for violence that the larger public would otherwise have ignored. In Lyon in 2015, Yassin Salhi, a delivery driver, beheaded his boss before trying to blow up gas canisters at a processing plant. Farook, one of the San Bernadino attackers, worked at the county health department whose Christmas party he and his wife targeted. In both cases, had the attackers not pledged loyalty to ISIS, law enforcement and the media might have described the attacks as workplace violence, not terrorism. Once officials attributed the acts to ISIS-linked terrorists, media attention—and thus the psychological impact—went through the roof.

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*Groups encourage lone wolves when they are too weak to carry out organized attacks themselves.*

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Finally, lone wolves frighten people because they can strike anywhere. The 9/11 attacks targeted the symbols of U.S. financial, military, and political power; for many, the attacks struck at their identity as Americans but did not affect their personal security. A massacre at a nightclub or an office party, by contrast, hits much closer to home.

Despite these advantages, most terrorist organizations have shied away from lone wolves. Groups avoid them partly because they often fail. The high death tolls of the attacks by Mateen and Bouhlel were unusual. Most lone wolves kill only a few people, if any, before police neutralize them. The Tsarnaev brothers, who in 2013 killed three people with primitive bombs at the Boston Marathon, were typical.

Lone-wolf attacks mostly flop because the perpetrators are untrained in violence. The terrorism scholar Thomas Hegghammer has found that the involvement of someone with prior combat or terrorist experience both dramatically improves the odds of a plot's succeeding and makes the attack deadlier. By using untrained militants, groups risk damaging their reputations with repeated failures.

Another problem is that group leaders do not control lone wolves, who might adopt tactics that hurt the broader cause. Violence without a strategy terrifies, but it can also backfire. McVeigh's attack, for example, discredited other far-right movements: McVeigh claimed he was dealing a blow to a tyrannical government, but the death of

19 children and three pregnant women in the bombing made it hard for other antigovernment zealots to defend him. The fact that many lone wolves suffer from mental illness makes this lack of discipline even more likely. Unfortunately, ISIS seems to be ignoring these constraints. It has so far accepted, and actually encouraged, lone-wolf violence committed in its name—a surprising turn even considering the low standards of terrorist groups.

## **THE ILLIBERAL INTERNATIONAL**

Lone-wolf attacks are having a far more powerful impact than their relatively modest death tolls might suggest. In the United States and Europe, they are encouraging Islamophobia, shattering good relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, and even threatening liberal democracy itself.

A report published last year by the Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University found that “Islamophobic political vitriol intensified” in the period following the San Bernardino attack. After the Orlando shooting, a Gallup poll found that almost 40 percent of Americans favored then Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump’s proposal to ban Muslims from entering the United States. And the effects weren’t just rhetorical: according to the FBI, anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States rose by 67 percent from 2014 to 2015. In Europe, refugees have faced a similar backlash. A recent Pew poll indicated that 59 percent of Europeans feared that the presence of refugees would increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks in the EU. In the first four months of 2016, arsonists carried out 45 attacks on refugee camps in Germany. And in northern Italy, far-right protesters have repeatedly torched prayer rooms in refugee camps.

Such Islamophobia can begin a vicious cycle. When public opinion turns on Muslim communities, they tend to withdraw into themselves, trust law enforcement—and the wider society—less, and risk turning into breeding grounds for radicals. For instance, for four months following the Paris attacks, a network of friends, family, and petty criminals helped Salah Abdeslam, one of the perpetrators, evade a massive international manhunt while hiding in his hometown of Molenbeek, in Belgium. Groups such as ISIS often highlight discrimination and hostile rhetoric and use decisions such as the French government’s ban on wearing the Islamic veil in public places as proof that the West is at war with Islam.

Meanwhile, demagogues have exploited the fear of Muslims in order to undermine public confidence in government, call for draconian security measures, reject refugees fleeing violence, and turn societies against religious minorities, particularly Muslims. Far-right movements are growing stronger in several European countries. Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orban, has long played on public fear of Muslim foreigners to win support for turning his country into what he has termed an "illiberal state," arguing that the community, not the individual, should lie at the center of politics. To that end, he has centralized power, restricted media freedom, and undermined the independence of the judiciary. In December 2016, Austria came close to electing Norbert Hofer of the far-right Freedom Party to the presidency, and anti-immigrant far-right parties have emerged from the political fringes in France and the United Kingdom. In the latter, anti-immigrant sentiment played a major role in the decision to leave the European Union. In the United States, Islamophobia and fear of terrorism—despite few attacks or fatalities on U.S. soil since 9/11—fueled the rise of Trump and other anti-immigrant politicians. Trump's calls for establishing a Muslim registry, renewing the use of torture, and monitoring mosques as a matter of course all contradict the U.S. principles of freedom of religion and respect for human rights.

### **FIGHTING BACK**

Governments can reduce the number of lone-wolf attacks, even though official efforts cannot stop them completely. One of the best ways to do so is to keep lone wolves lonely: the less they interact with potential coconspirators, and especially with groups that can give them direction and training, the less dangerous they will be. Officials must therefore focus on gathering intelligence, arresting suspected cell leaders, and destroying terrorist command centers with drone strikes. If leaders cannot reach out to potential followers, they cannot train terrorists or organize them into groups large enough to conduct major attacks. Better lone wolves than wolf packs.

It is also important to try to make lone-wolf attacks less lethal. The United States has programs that limit the possession of explosives to only those with a legitimate need, making it far harder for terrorists to build bombs. Taking a similar approach to semiautomatic weapons would be sensible. Unfortunately, gun control—even in the context of counterterrorism—seems to be a political nonstarter.



Intelligence services should also work to identify lone wolves ahead of time. On this front, ISIS' heavy reliance on social media makes the group vulnerable. Monitoring social media can help officials spot potential attackers without previous connections to other terrorists, as online operatives may encourage them or they may post their intentions online. One of the two Islamist terrorists who last July killed a priest in a church in northern France, for example, reportedly announced his intention to do so well in advance on social media.

To hinder ISIS' recruitment, the U.S. government should continue to press companies such as Facebook and Twitter to tighten restrictions on accounts linked to the group, monitoring users more regularly and suspending their accounts when necessary. In 2015 and 2016, as ISIS' reliance on social media became a public concern, several companies, including Twitter, suspended accounts linked to ISIS. Companies bristle when they perceive government censorship, but in reality, the government is simply asking them to abide by their own terms of service, which often place tight restrictions on potentially illegal activity.

ISIS will adapt to suspensions by creating new accounts and taking to new forms of communication, but the new means of communication will often fall short of the old ones. Although ISIS had tens of thousands of accounts on Twitter, for example, it used only a small fraction of them to spread most of its propaganda. Suspending these accounts can set back recruitment. A recent study by the terrorist social media analysts J. M. Berger and Heather Perez found that ISIS' Twitter presence declined from 2014 to 2016 in part because of Twitter's efforts to shut down its accounts.

Governments can also plant disinformation in ISIS' network. The group is already highly suspicious of infiltrators—it has rejected or even executed foreign fighters on suspicion of spying—so officials should exploit this paranoia by playing up the presence of moles and the likelihood of defections. Law enforcement should also carry out offensive cyberattacks on extremist sites. These attacks could alter the sites so that they pass on false contact information, present distorted propaganda, or otherwise sow confusion, or they could simply take the sites down.

Countering ISIS' broader message is also important, albeit exceptionally difficult. In theory, doing so could hurt the group's fundraising and recruitment. In practice, however, government efforts are often cumbersome, cautious, and ineffective. The best voices are those of

former recruits or others with firsthand experience with the group, not those of officials. The former can talk credibly about the dismal conditions in areas controlled by ISIS, the killing of jihadists, and other problems that run counter to the group's propaganda.

One imperative—and the one governments are least likely to heed in the aftermath of an attack—is to build support within Muslim communities for official counterterrorism efforts. If a community has good relations with the police and the rest of society, it will have fewer grievances for terrorists to exploit and its members will have stronger incentives to point out malefactors in their midst. In the United States, law enforcement could achieve better results by increasing their engagement with Muslim communities. In particular, officials should base their relationships with Muslim communities on more than just fighting terrorism. They should address crime and anti-Muslim harassment and help immigrants access social services. In addition, they should work with community leaders in advance on plans to protect their communities from the Islamophobic violence that often follows jihadist terrorist attacks. Situating terrorism in a broader context of public safety is more effective than isolating it, as Muslim communities rightly fear that law enforcement will focus only on terrorism while ignoring anti-Muslim crimes.

In addition, U.S. law enforcement must recognize the remarkable diversity of American Muslims, among whom ethnicity, sect, and tradition all vary widely. Different communities may have different concerns, different leaders, and different news sources. Local governments should take care to hire diverse police forces and train their members in cultural awareness.

A culture of greater resilience would also help. Despite the relatively low number of terrorism-related deaths on U.S. soil since 9/11, public fear of terrorism remains high. During his presidency, Barack Obama tried to highlight the United States' many counterterrorist successes. Trump and other politicians should do the same and make Americans aware of the low risk, rather than attempting to exploit people's fears for political gain.

These measures, alone or in combination, would not stop all lone wolves. But they would allow law enforcement to catch more of them and reduce the lethality of those attacks that go undetected. Most of all, they would diminish the political impact of lone-wolf attacks—and thus make the phenomenon as a whole less dangerous. 🌐

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# The Dignity Deficit

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## Reclaiming Americans' Sense of Purpose

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*Arthur C. Brooks*

“**H**e who establishes conventional wisdom owns history,” a historian once told me. So it’s no surprise that ever since last year’s extraordinary U.S. presidential election, all sides have been bitterly fighting over what happened—and why. The explanations for Donald Trump’s surprise victory have varied widely. But one factor that clearly played an important role was the alienation and disaffection of less educated white voters in rural and exurban areas. Trump may have proved to be a uniquely popular tribune for this constituency. But the anger he tapped into has been building for half a century.

The roots of that anger lie all the way back in the 1960s, when President Lyndon Johnson launched his so-called War on Poverty. Only by properly understanding the mistakes made in that war—mistakes that have deprived generations of Americans of their fundamental sense of dignity—can the country’s current leaders and political parties hope to start fixing them. And only once they properly understand the problem will they be able to craft the kind of cultural and political agenda that can heal the country’s wounds.

### **ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ**

On April 24, 1964, Johnson paid a highly publicized visit to Inez, the biggest town in eastern Kentucky’s Martin County. Inez was the heart of coal country, the most typical Appalachian town that Johnson’s advisers could find. In the 1960s, “typical Appalachian” meant a place suffering from crippling despair. The citizens of Inez were poor. Many of them were unemployed, and their children were malnourished. Johnson had chosen Inez to illustrate that dire poverty was not just a Third World phenomenon: it existed right here at home, and not just in

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*I'm from the government, and I'm here to help: Johnson with Tom Fletcher, April 1964*

cities but in rural America as well. But he also came to Inez to announce that this tragedy could be remedied.

In one famous photo op, Johnson stopped by the home of a man named Tom Fletcher, an unemployed 38-year-old father of eight. The president climbed up onto Fletcher's porch, squatted down next to him, and listened to the man's story. According to a 2013 article in the *Lexington Herald-Leader* by John Cheves, "Fletcher never finished elementary school and could not really read. The places where he had labored—coal mines, sawmills—were closed. He struggled to support his wife and eight children." The president used Fletcher's struggles as a springboard for his own announcement. "I have called for a national war on poverty," he declared. "Our objective: total victory." Years later, Cheves reports, Johnson still remembered the encounter. "My determination," he wrote in his memoirs, "was reinforced that day to use the powers of the presidency to the fullest extent that I could, to persuade America to help all its Tom Fletchers." Over the next five decades, the federal government would spend more than \$20 trillion trying to achieve Johnson's dream with social welfare programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Tom Fletcher personally received some of this largess: he got welfare benefits and found employment through government make-work initiatives, laboring on crews that cleared brush and picked up trash



from roadsides. But he never held down a steady job, Cheves recounts, and although his standard of living rose along with the national average, he never made it out of poverty. By 1969, he no longer worked at all

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*Between 1966 and 2014, the United States spent trillions of dollars but saw no reduction in the poverty rate.*

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and relied instead on disability checks and other public assistance. After his first wife died, he married a woman four decades his junior, with whom he had two more children. In a cruel final twist, Fletcher's second wife murdered one of those children (and tried to kill the other) as part of a scam to collect on

their burial insurance. In 2004, with his wife still in prison, Fletcher died, never having gotten much closer to the American dream than he was when Johnson climbed onto his porch.

Visit the area today, and despite Johnson's promises, you'll see that idleness and depression still hang heavy in the air. In Inez, as across the country, the welfare state and modern technology have made joblessness and poverty less materially painful. Homes have electricity and running water. Refrigerators, personal computers, and cars are ubiquitous. Economic growth and innovation have delivered material abundance, and some of the War on Poverty's programs have proved effective at bolstering struggling families.

But even though poverty has become less materially miserable, it is no less common. In Martin County, just 27 percent of adults are in the labor force. Welfare is more common than work. Caloric deficits have been replaced by rampant obesity. Meanwhile, things aren't much better on the national level. In 1966, when the War on Poverty programs were finally up and running, the national poverty rate stood at 14.7 percent. By 2014, it stood at 14.8 percent. In other words, the United States had spent trillions of dollars but seen no reduction in the poverty rate.

Of course, the poverty rate doesn't take into account rising consumption standards or a variety of government transfers, from food stamps to public housing to cash assistance. But the calculations that determine it do include most of the income that Americans earn for themselves. So although the rate is a poor tool for gauging material conditions, it does capture trends in Americans' ability to earn success. And what it shows is that progress on that front has been scant.

The War on Poverty has offered plenty of economic analgesics but few cures. This is a failure not just in the eyes of conservative critics but also according to the standard set by the man who launched the campaign. On signing the Appalachian Regional Development Act in March 1965, Johnson argued that the United States should aspire to more than simply sustaining people in poverty. “This nation,” he declared, “is committed not only to human freedom but also to human dignity and decency.” R. Sargent Shriver, a key Johnson adviser on the War on Poverty, put it even more explicitly: “We’re investing in human dignity, not doles.”

### **I NEED YOU TO NEED ME**

At its core, to be treated with dignity means being considered worthy of respect. Certain situations bring out a clear, conscious sense of our own dignity: when we receive praise or promotions at work, when we see our children succeed, when we see a volunteer effort pay off and change our neighborhood for the better. We feel a sense of dignity when our own lives produce value for ourselves and others. Put simply, to feel dignified, one must be needed by others.

The War on Poverty did not fail because it did not raise the daily caloric consumption of Tom Fletcher (it did). It failed because it did nothing significant to make him and Americans like him needed and thus help them gain a sense of dignity. It also got the U.S. government into the business of treating people left behind by economic change as liabilities to manage rather than as human assets to develop.

The dignity deficit that has resulted is particularly acute among working-class men, most of whom are white and live in rural and exurban parts of the United States. In his recent book *Men Without Work*, the political economist (and American Enterprise Institute scholar) Nicholas Eberstadt shows that the percentage of working-age men outside the labor force—that is, neither working nor seeking work—has more than tripled since 1965, rising from 3.3 percent to 11.6 percent. And men without a high school degree are more than twice as likely to be part of this “un-working” class.

These men are withdrawing not only from the labor force but from other social institutions as well. Two-thirds of them are unmarried. And Eberstadt found that despite their lack of work obligations, these men are no more likely to spend time volunteering, participating in religious activities, or caring for family members than men with full-time employment.

That sort of isolation and idleness correlates with severe pathologies in rural areas where drug abuse and suicide have become far more common in recent years. In 2015, the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* published an extraordinary paper by the economists Anne

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*Involuntary unemployment  
saps one's sense of dignity.*

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Case and Angus Deaton. They found that, in contrast to the favorable long-term trends in life expectancy across the rest of the developed world, the mortality rate among middle-aged white

Americans without any college education has actually risen since 1999. The main reasons? Since that year, among that population, fatalities due to chronic liver disease and cirrhosis have increased by 46 percent, fatalities from suicide have risen by 78 percent, and fatalities due to drug and alcohol poisoning are up by a shocking 323 percent.

Unsurprisingly, those left behind hold a distinctly gloomy view of the future. According to a survey conducted last year by the Kaiser Family Foundation and CNN, fewer than one-quarter of white Americans without a college degree expect their children to enjoy a better standard of living in the future than they themselves have today, and half of them believe things will be even worse. (In contrast, according to the same survey, other historically marginalized communities have retained a more old-school American sense of optimism: 36 percent of working-class blacks and 48 percent of working-class Hispanics anticipate a better life for their children.)

To be sure, rural and exurban whites who possess few in-demand skills and little education are hardly the only vulnerable group in the United States today. But the evidence is undeniable that this community is suffering an acute dignity crisis. Left behind every bit as much as the urban poor, millions of working-class whites have languished while elites have largely ignored them or treated them with contempt.

Americans from all walks of life voted for Trump. But exit polls unambiguously showed that a crucial central pillar of his support came from modern-day Tom Fletchers: Trump beat Hillary Clinton among white men without a college degree by nearly 50 percentage points. Tellingly, among counties where Trump outperformed the 2012 GOP candidate Mitt Romney, the margins were greatest in those places with the highest rates of drug use, alcohol abuse, and suicide.

Many analysts and policy experts saw Trump's campaign as a series of sideshows and unserious proposals that, even if implemented,

would not actually improve things for his working-class supporters. For example, academic research clearly shows that trade protectionism—a major theme of Trump’s campaign—is more likely to destroy jobs than create them. Yet Trump won regardless, because he was the first major-party nominee in decades who even appeared to care about the dignity of these working-class voters whose lives are falling apart.

## **WELFARE TO WORK**

If its goal is to instill dignity, the U.S. government does not need to find more innovative ways to “help” people; rather, it must find better ways to make them more necessary. The question for leaders, no matter where they sit on the political spectrum, must be, Does this policy make people more or less needed—in their families, their communities, and the broader economy?

Some may ask whether making people necessary is an appropriate role for government. The answer is yes: indeed, it represents a catastrophic failure of government that millions of Americans depend on the state instead of creating value for themselves and others. However, it’s not enough to merely make people feel that they are needed; they must become more authentically, objectively necessary.

The single most important part of a “neededness agenda” is putting more people to work. The unemployment rate is relatively low today, at around 4.7 percent, after peaking at around ten percent in 2010, in the wake of the financial crisis. But the unemployment rate can be a misleading metric, since it does not take into account people who are no longer even looking for work. A more accurate measure of how many Americans are working is the labor-force participation rate: the percentage of all working-age adults who are currently employed. That figure hit a peak of just over 67 percent in 2000 and has since fallen to around 63 percent today. The decline has been particularly pronounced among men. In 1954, 98 percent of prime-age American men (those between the ages of 25 and 54) participated in the labor force; today, that figure has fallen to 88 percent.

Involuntary unemployment saps one’s sense of dignity. According to the American Enterprise Institute economist Kevin Hassett, recent data suggest that a ten percent increase in the jobless rate may raise the suicide rate among men by almost 1.5 percent. And a study published by the sociologist Cristobal Young in 2012 found that receiving unemployment insurance barely puts a dent in the unhappiness that



follows the loss of a job. Feeling superfluous triggers a deep malaise that welfare benefits do not even come close to mitigating.

Increasing the labor-force participation rate will require significant tax and regulatory reforms to encourage more firms to locate and expand their operations in the United States. A logical first step would be to reform the draconian American approach to taxing corporations.

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*Elites have an ethical duty to reveal how they have achieved and sustained success.*

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On average, between federal and state policies, U.S. businesses pay a tax rate of around 39 percent. That is far above the worldwide average of 22.5 percent and even more out of alignment with the average rates paid by companies in Asia (20.1 percent) and Europe (18.9 percent).

One promising, revenue-neutral plan, put forward by the economists Eric Toder and Alan Viard (the latter of the American Enterprise Institute), would cut the U.S. rate to 15 percent (in conjunction with other important structural reforms).

Putting more people to work must also become an explicit aim of the social safety net. Arguably, the greatest innovation in social policy in recent history was the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The PRWORA, which became synonymous with the phrase “welfare reform,” made several major changes to federal policy. It devolved greater flexibility to the states but established new constraints, such as a limit on how long someone could receive federal welfare benefits and a work requirement for most able-bodied adults. The PRWORA was denounced at the time as a callous right-wing scheme. Critics insisted that people were only jobless because there were no opportunities to work and that the new requirements would force single mothers and vulnerable children into poverty. The opposite has happened. According to the poverty expert Scott Winship, child poverty in single-parent homes has fallen by more than ten percent since 1996. Overall child poverty now sits at an all-time low.

This demonstrates that commonsense limits on welfare can increase people’s incentives to seek employment without crushing them or their families. Congress should apply that lesson to other programs. Housing vouchers and food stamps have weak work requirements that are rarely enforced. Simply bringing those requirements closer to the ones created by the PRWORA could help many Americans reenter the labor force.

Federal disability insurance, or SSDI, is in even more urgent need of reform. Many workers and employers have come to view SSDI as just another form of unemployment insurance. Its enrollment numbers have swelled by almost 40 percent since 2005, even as research offers no evidence of an accompanying uptick in actually disabling conditions. Economists have proposed several interesting ideas for curtailing this surge, which would keep more people in the work force. One plan would adjust employers' payroll tax burdens depending on how frequently their workers enroll in SSDI; another would require employers to obtain private disability insurance policies, which have a better track record than SSDI when it comes to keeping employees in jobs where they are needed.

These policies represent fairly traditional conservative thinking, and as most conservatives would likely point out, putting them in place years ago might have mitigated much of the suffering that now afflicts so many Americans. But conservatives have failed to get their proposals enacted, in no small part because they have made the wrong arguments for them. Why reform taxes? "To boost earnings and GDP." Why require work for welfare? "To make those lazy welfare queens work!" Such rhetoric has made good policies sound out of touch and inhumane. The most compelling reason for tax reform and further welfare reform is to create more opportunities for people at the periphery of society.

The truth is that not all good economic policy aligns perfectly with conservative orthodoxy. Take, for example, the challenge of helping low-wage workers earn enough to support their families. For years, conservatives have railed against increases in the minimum wage, citing evidence that such increases do not decrease poverty rates and may well destroy jobs at the bottom of the pay scale. Although well intentioned, minimum-wage policies are more likely to restrict poor Americans' opportunities to earn a stable living than to enhance them. So governments at every level should forget about increasing minimum wages—which is where the usual conservative argument ends. But they should also experiment with reducing minimum wages to help people trapped in long-term unemployment, making these vulnerable people more attractive to hire. Governments would then supply those workers with direct wage subsidies to increase their take-home income. For example, Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute has proposed that the federal government

let employers hire long-term unemployed people at \$4 per hour and then itself transfer an additional \$4 per hour to each of these workers. Another promising idea is the expansion of an existing subsidy, the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit for low-income people who work. The EITC prioritizes families but is less generous to individuals without children; Washington should consider increasing the credit for the latter. Such pro-work policies would help achieve the noble goal of ensuring that hard work results in sufficient rewards, without the negative consequences that accompany minimum-wage hikes.

Creating more opportunities for Americans to work would also require addressing the broken U.S. immigration system, which has a significant effect on the labor market. Economists disagree vigorously about the precise nature of that effect, but it's reasonable to conclude that illegal immigration tends to moderately reduce wages in low-skill industries, whereas the legal immigration of high-skilled individuals has a positive effect on the overall economy and job creation. Congress and the Trump administration should therefore prioritize the enforcement of existing immigration laws, not through mass deportations but by targeting low-wage employers who hire and exploit illegal immigrants. But they should also significantly loosen the current quotas that limit the number of high-skilled immigrants who can enter the United States.

### **SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS**

Making people more necessary will also require improving human capital through better education. At present, U.S. public schools leave millions of young people behind, especially the poor. This is not for lack of funding. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. government spending per pupil (adjusted for inflation) has more than doubled since 1970. Yet math and reading scores for 17-year-olds haven't budged in four decades, and the achievement gap between poor and rich students has widened by about a third.

Policies designed to increase competitive pressures on public schools—vouchers to allow low-income families to send their children to private schools, the devolution of more latitude to state and local authorities, and the expansion of charter schools—are the right place to begin. But these ubiquitous proposals are only the start.

For several generations, American education has moved away from teaching skills that help people specialize and gain greater job security.

According to one trade association estimate, nearly 3.5 million manufacturing positions will be created over the next decade, but as many as two million may go unfilled. Another estimate suggests that the U.S. welding industry alone may face an imminent shortage of nearly 300,000 skilled workers. Much of the blame for such gaps goes to a widespread “college or bust” mentality that pervades American society and has resulted in a disconnect between supply and demand in the blue-collar labor market. Employers in several sectors are begging for more workers, but many young adults don’t have the necessary skills because they were never encouraged to learn them. There’s a fairly easy policy fix for this problem. Career- and technical-training programs take, on average, only two years to complete, and students can attend them while still enrolled in high school. To get more students to pursue such options, governments should reallocate financial assistance toward trade schools and apprenticeship programs.

For that change to work, however, politicians and other influential figures will need to use moral suasion to attack the cultural fixation on gaining a four-year degree at any cost. More than 90 percent of high school seniors aspire to postsecondary education, and about 80 percent try it out within two years of graduating from high school, but only about 40 percent successfully earn a degree. That leaves too many young Americans with unfulfilled dreams, college debt, and no credentials or marketable skills—an outcome that could be avoided if they pursued a more practical direction.

Skills-based training isn’t only for the young. The crisis of dignity is most acutely felt among middle-aged populations that have been badly served by decades of lackluster federally funded job-training programs. Instead of relying on top-down directives from Washington, training programs should be embedded in the private sector and gently overseen by authorities at the state and local level, where officials could entice companies through tax incentives to train and hire workers who have been out of the labor force for long periods of time.

## **TWO AMERICAS**

A public policy agenda focused on building dignity and neediness would mark a departure from the status quo, but not an unthinkable or radical one. But on their own, these policies would not produce the dramatic change that is necessary. Only a profound cultural shift can achieve that.



Today, the top and the bottom of American society live in separate worlds. They do not attend school together, socialize together, or work together. They hardly know each other. As a result, few people in either of these two Americas even recognize the social trends that are widening the cultural gulf between them. Some differences are trivial, such as regional accents or entertainment preferences. Other differences, however, are more consequential: for example, the birth-rate among unmarried mothers. Whereas less than ten percent of births to college-educated women occur out of wedlock, the comparable figure for women with only a high school degree or less is more than 50 percent. Children born out of wedlock are more likely to grow up without a father, and those brought up in such circumstances are less likely to graduate from high school, more likely to suffer from mental health problems, and less likely to work later in life. In other words, class-based cultural differences are more than a matter of curiosity. They are a major factor in producing the misery that so many Americans experience.

Of course, the United States does not need a cabinet-level secretary of middle-class morals. But legislators and officials should try to ensure that any social policy passes a simple test: Does it weaken family integrity or social cohesion—for example, by encouraging single parenthood, fragmenting communities, erecting barriers to religious expression, or rewarding idleness?

Moral suasion can be even more powerful than policy. Before elites on the left and the right do battle over policy fixes, they need to ask themselves, “What am I personally doing to share the secrets of my success with those outside my social class?” According to the best social science available, those secrets are not refundable tax credits or auto-shop classes, as important as those things might be. Rather, the keys to fulfillment are building a stable family life, belonging to a strong community, and working hard. Elites have an ethical duty to reveal how they have achieved and sustained success. Readers can decide for themselves whether this suggestion reflects hopeless paternalism, Good Samaritanism, or perhaps both.

## **MAKE AMERICA DIGNIFIED AGAIN**

A few months after the launch of the War on Poverty in 1964, voters in Kentucky’s Martin County headed to the polls to choose the next president of the United States. They rewarded the candidate who had

traveled there, listened to them, and pledged to fight for their dignity. The deeply conservative community, where Richard Nixon had easily won in the 1960 presidential contest, made a brief exception: Johnson, a liberal Democrat, won Martin County with just over 51 percent of the vote. The outcome of the 2016 election was similar in one important respect: the man who swept Martin County with a staggering 89 percent of the vote was the candidate who had promised to return dignity to its people.

But merely backing the winning candidate will not guarantee dignity for today's Tom Fletchers. The War on Poverty proved that beyond all doubt, having led to five decades of debt and welfare dependence, which, when blended with the Great Recession, helped produce the anger and disillusionment that drove the current populist surge.

Many elites and officials have reacted to Trump's victory with a combination of shock, alarm, and depression. But they should see it as an opportunity for learning and reform, and they should respond with a positive policy agenda that is radically pro-work and serious about developing human capital. And they should learn to treat people at the periphery of society—from Inez to Detroit to the Rio Grande Valley—with enough respect to share with them the cultural and moral norms that can bring happiness and success in life. Doing so would be politically prudent. But much more important, it would help fulfill the moral obligation that leadership brings: to maximize the inherent dignity that all Americans are born with, remembering that we all possess a deep need to be needed. 🌐

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# The Prisoner Dilemma

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## Ending America's Incarceration Epidemic

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*Holly Harris*

**D**uring the past decade, a time of intense political polarization in the United States, criminal justice reform has emerged as an unlikely unifier. Democrats and Republicans have reached across the aisle, compelled by a shared recognition that flawed legal codes and sentencing laws (among other features of the criminal justice system) have destroyed lives, drained billions of taxpayer dollars, and failed to provide Americans with the public safety they deserve. This broad agreement led to the introduction, in 2015 and 2016, of bipartisan legislation in the U.S. Congress that would have produced comprehensive reform at the federal level—including changes to mandatory minimum sentencing laws, which have contributed to the explosion in U.S. incarceration rates by reducing judges' discretion in sentencing. Supporters of the legislation represented an extraordinarily wide ideological spectrum: from Speaker of the House Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, former Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, and the billionaire donor Charles Koch on the right to President Barack Obama, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the philanthropist George Soros' Open Society Foundations on the left.

But last September, the bill, which had seemed certain to pass in the Senate, died without ever reaching the floor after opposition from a handful of high-profile GOP senators apparently convinced Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky not to bring it up for a vote. "I think that Senator McConnell understandably did not want to tee up an issue that split our caucus right before the 2016 election," remarked Republican Senator John Cornyn of Texas, one of the bill's most vocal proponents, in an interview with *The New York Times*.

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Of course, 2016 was no ordinary election year. During the presidential campaign, Donald Trump, the eventual GOP nominee, painted a grim portrait of the United States. “Crime is out of control, and rapidly getting worse,” he tweeted in July. “When I take the oath of office next year, I will restore law and order to our country,” he pledged in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention later that month, to thunderous applause.

It is no wonder that Trump’s message on this issue resonated with many voters: television news reports, newspaper headlines, and social media feeds have left Americans with the distinct impression that crime is on the rise. Media attention tends to focus on a small number of high-profile incidents, leading many pundits and politicians to declare that the country is entering a new period of lawlessness that harks back to the years between

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*The idea of a new crime wave is a myth. What is real, however, is an epidemic of incarceration.*

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the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, the last time that violent crime rates rose nationwide. Public opinion reflects the impact of such rhetoric: a Gallup poll published last April found that 53 percent of Americans worried “a great deal” about crime—a 15-year high.

Such fears are misplaced. Last September, the FBI released its annual crime statistics report. It showed that although violent crime increased nationwide by 3.9 percent in 2015, the broader trend has been in the opposite direction: the violent crime rate in 2014 was 0.7 percent lower than in 2011 and 16.5 percent lower than in 2006. The long-term trend is even more striking. In 1991, authorities reported 758 violent crimes per 100,000 Americans. By 2015, that number had dropped to 373: a decrease of more than 50 percent. And although data for 2016 will not be available for another year, it is likely that crime rates will continue to hover at or near their current historically low levels. Early signs already indicate that many cities in which crime rose during 2015, including Baltimore and New York City, experienced declines in 2016.

The idea of a new crime wave is a myth. What is real, however, is an epidemic of incarceration. The numbers are staggering. According to a report published last year by the Prison Policy Initiative, U.S. penal authorities “hold more than 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 942 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,283

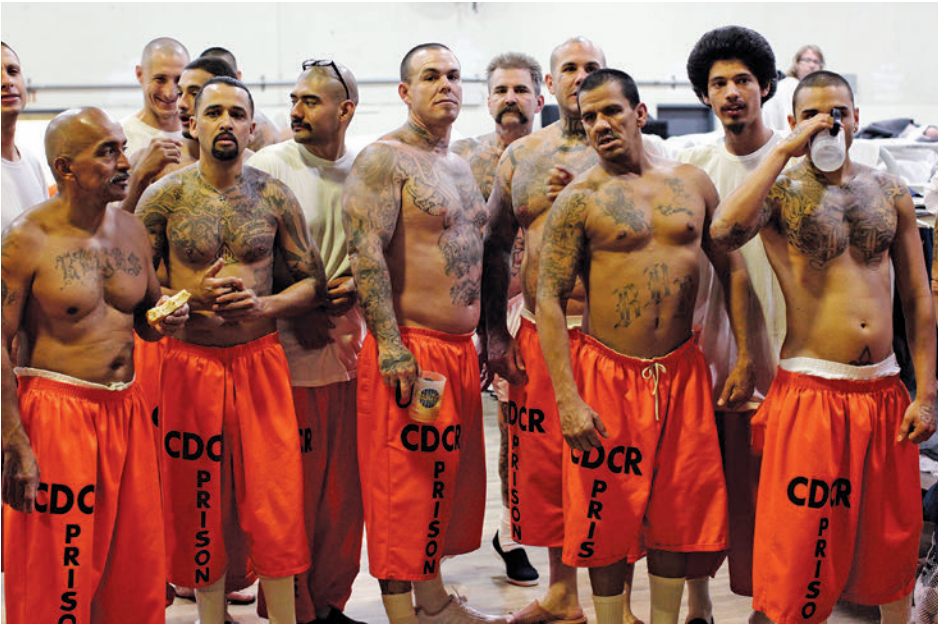


local jails, and 79 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, and prisons in the U.S. territories.” Over the course of a single year, more than 11 million people will be admitted to an American prison or jail.

It wasn’t always like this. In 1972, for every 100,000 U.S. residents, 161 were incarcerated. By 2015, that rate had more than quadrupled, with nearly 670 out of every 100,000 Americans behind bars. That is slightly lower than the peak rate, which was reached in 2007–8, but it is still shockingly high. Among industrialized nations, the United States has by far the highest rate of incarceration. The conviction and imprisonment of so many Americans has resulted primarily from more than three decades of “tough on crime” policies that legislators began to favor in the early 1980s, persuaded by the deceptively simple logic of reducing crime by locking up as many offenders as possible. Defenders of this approach credit it with producing the marked decline in crime rates that began in the early 1990s. But according to research published by the urban policy scholar William Spelman and the economist Steven Levitt, the rise in incarceration has been responsible for only about 25 percent of the decrease in crime rates. The rest of the decline, they argue, has stemmed from a complex combination of economic and social trends, innovative policing tactics, and other factors.

Meanwhile, the explosion in incarceration has had significantly harmful effects on U.S. society: dangerously overcrowded prisons, abysmal recidivism rates, and the creation of profound racial, economic, and gender disparities in the criminal justice system. And the price of industrial-scale incarceration in economic terms is massive. The average annual cost to house, feed, and care for an American inmate now exceeds \$30,000. Between 1980 and 2013, federal spending on prisons rose more than sevenfold, from \$970 million, adjusted for inflation, to nearly \$7 billion, adjusted for inflation. The National Association of State Budget Officers reports that state general-fund spending on corrections grew from an inflation-adjusted \$10.6 billion in 1987 to \$50.9 billion in 2015, a 380 percent increase. According to the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, combined state and federal corrections expenditures more than quadrupled in the last three decades, from approximately \$17 billion (adjusted for inflation) in 1980 to more than \$80 billion in 2010.

Although comprehensive federal reform has proved elusive, lawmakers at the state level—in red, blue, and purple states—have



*Hard time: inmates in Chino, California, June 2011*

managed to achieve significant change. Although their details vary, a raft of state initiatives have demonstrated that smart reforms can save money, lower crime rates, and give offenders the chance to rejoin society as productive, law-abiding citizens. This matters a great deal, since in 2015, out of the roughly 1.5 million people incarcerated in prisons in the United States, 1.35 million were housed in state facilities. Nevertheless, federal reform is still imperative. A study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission (a bipartisan, independent federal agency) found that in 2005, nearly half of all the federal offenders who were either released from federal prison after serving a sentence or placed on a term of probation were rearrested within eight years, either on new charges or for some other violation of their probation or terms of release. Additionally, the composition of the federal inmate population makes it fertile ground for the kinds of effective treatment programs that reformers have championed as a way to make prison more rehabilitative. More than half of federal prisoners are incarcerated for drug offenses, compared with just 16 percent of state prisoners.

Now that the 2016 election is over, Democrats and Republicans in Congress should once again take up the cause of commonsense sentencing and recidivism-reduction reforms. If Trump wants to make the country safer, the best way to do so would be to study successful

reforms in states from Connecticut to Georgia and advocate transformational changes to the broken federal system.

### **THE (VERY) BIG HOUSE**

The U.S. incarceration system is literally bursting at the seams. One recent analysis from the Government Accountability Office found that the spike in prison populations has led to overcrowding in nearly 40 percent of federal facilities. States are also struggling. In 2015, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 19 states' systems had exceeded their maximum capacities. Illinois' correctional facilities, for example, were designed to hold just under 28,000 prisoners but were housing more than 46,000.

Looking at these numbers, one might conclude that U.S. cities and towns were overrun by so many dangerous criminals that the country had run out of places to put them all. But consider who actually fills all those cells. In 2015, around 93 percent of federal prisoners were nonviolent offenders, most of whom were serving time for drug-related offenses. The situation in many state prison systems is similar; between 2009 and 2015, 59 percent of the offenders in the custody of the Louisiana Department of Corrections had been convicted of nonviolent crimes.

Yet there is little evidence that doing time in U.S. prisons makes inmates more responsible citizens. An influential 2011 study published by the criminologists Francis Cullen, Cheryl Jonson, and Daniel Nagin found that regardless of what kind of offense an inmate has committed, prison does not reduce his or her recidivism any more than alternatives such as drug treatment and mental health counseling. Indeed, the researchers found that prison time might even increase recidivism, particularly among low-risk offenders.

Spending time behind bars also makes it much harder for someone convicted of a crime to live a productive life once released, because most ex-convicts struggle to find work. According to a 2010 study conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts, on average, men who have been incarcerated work nine fewer weeks per year and take home 40 percent less annual pay than other men. Such struggles contribute to recidivism, as ex-convicts turn to crime to earn money. According to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, of the 262,000 people who were released from federal prison between 2002 and 2006, half of those who could not secure any employment during the period

of their supervised release (usually a period of two to five years) committed a new crime or violated the terms of their release and were sent back to prison. In contrast, only seven percent of those who did find work wound up behind bars again.

The burgeoning U.S. prison population reflects a federal criminal code that has spiraled out of control. No one—not even the government itself—has ever been able to specify with any certainty the precise number of federal crimes defined by the 54 sections contained in the 27,000 or so pages of the U.S. Code. In the 1980s, lawyers at the Department of Justice attempted to tabulate the figure “for the express purpose of exposing the idiocy” of the criminal code, as one of them later put it. The best they were

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*The long arm of the law reaches into nearly every aspect of American life.*

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able to come up with was an educated guess of 3,000 crimes. Today, the conservative Heritage Foundation estimates that federal laws currently enumerate nearly 5,000 crimes, a number that grows every year.

Overcriminalization extends beyond the law books, partly because regulations are often backed by criminal penalties. That is the case for rules that govern matters as trivial as the sale of grated cheese, the precise composition of chicken Kiev dishes, and the washing of cars at the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health. State laws add tens of thousands more such crimes. Taken together, they push the total number of criminally punishable offenses in the United States into the hundreds of thousands. The long arm of the law reaches into nearly every aspect of American life. The legal scholar Harvey Silverglate has concluded that the typical American commits at least three federal felonies a day, simply by going through his or her normal routine. If you package and ship certain food in plastic rather than cardboard containers, you might be in violation of the Lacey Act. If you call in sick to work in order to go to a ball game, you might be breaking laws that prohibit schemes to defraud a company. And if you get lost while riding a motorbike in the forest and accidentally wander onto protected land, you might run afoul of the Wilderness Act.

Another problem is that in recent years, by writing laws that lack a so-called *mens rea* requirement (named after the Latin term for “guilty mind”), legislators have made it more likely that people will break the law without intending to. A study conducted by the Heritage Foundation and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers



found that 40 percent of the nonviolent federal crimes established between 2005 and 2011 had “weak” intent requirements. This can lead to some appalling injustices, such as the case of Lawrence Lewis. As the chief engineer at a retirement home for U.S. military veterans in Washington, D.C., Lewis dealt with a backed-up sewage system by diverting its flow to a storm drain that he believed linked up to the city’s sewage-treatment system. Instead, the sewage entered a creek that ultimately joined with the Potomac River. Without intending to, Lewis had violated the Clean Water Act. He pleaded guilty in 2007 and received probation, a \$2,500 fine, and—perhaps worst of all—a criminal record.

To protect against such outcomes, states such as Michigan and Ohio have recently established default *mens rea* standards for all state laws that do not already include an intent requirement. But reform advocates and activists disagree about whether to pursue such a step at the federal level. Proponents back the idea as a way to ward off injustices that inevitably occur owing to the expansiveness of the criminal code. Opponents, on the other hand, fear that implementing such a standard would make it more difficult to prosecute environmental and financial crimes. The issue is a complicated one that even splits the Republican leadership in Congress. Bob Goodlatte of Virginia, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, passed a default *mens rea* bill through his committee and made it clear that any reform package that goes to the floor must include it. But Chuck Grassley of Ohio, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, opposes the policy and omitted it from his own reform package. If any reform legislation is to reach the president’s desk, it will likely require a compromise on *mens rea*, such as an agreement to apply any new default standard only to future legislation or to limit the offenses to which it would apply.

Finally, perhaps the most pernicious problem is the existence of so many laws requiring mandatory minimum sentences. During the 1980s and 1990s, at the height of the “war on drugs,” federal and state lawmakers created a host of new statutes that required that offenders receive specific prison sentences based on the nature of their crimes. Although these laws were generally intended to help reduce crime by creating stronger deterrents, they have often ended up doing far more harm than good. By restricting judges’ ability to consider all the facts of a case, they force courts to ignore mitigating evidence and have resulted in unduly harsh punishments that frequently do not fit the

crimes. By putting more people in prison for more time, they have also contributed to the explosion in prison populations. As of 2010, roughly 40 percent of federal inmates were subject to mandatory minimum sentences. There is no parole in the federal system, and inmates are required to serve at least 85 percent of their sentences before they become eligible for release. For those reasons and others, the federal prison population has grown from 24,640 in 1980, before Congress enacted the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which established the basic framework for mandatory minimum sentencing, to just under 220,000 in 2013, the year in which the federal prison population peaked.

The case of Weldon Angelos illustrates some of the injustices inherent in system. On two occasions in 2002, the 22-year-old father of three sold half a pound of marijuana worth about \$350 to a confidential informant in Utah. The informant alleged that Angelos was carrying a firearm during the second transaction (although that testimony was disputed). In Angelos' home, police later found guns, drug paraphernalia, and evidence suggesting that he was involved in drug trafficking and money laundering. In 2004, Angelos was convicted of 16 charges, several of which carried mandatory minimums. Even though he was a first-time, arguably nonviolent offender, he received a staggering 55-year sentence, with a projected release date of 2051. The shocking unfairness of the sentence was obvious even to Judge Paul Cassell, the federal judge who handed it down. Cassell, a George W. Bush appointee, delivered a 67-page ruling in which he called the sentence "unjust, cruel, and even irrational." But due to federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws, he had no choice but to apply it. Last May, after Angelos had served 12 years in prison, a federal court granted him an immediate sentence reduction and released him. In a show of compassion, the effort to free him was led by none other than the federal prosecutor who had helped put him away in the first place.

## **A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE**

Americans of all political and ideological backgrounds have recently taken up the cause of criminal justice reform. Unlikely coalitions have formed to push for change. Conservative and faith-focused groups such as the Louisiana Family Forum are working alongside the progressive ACLU. In Ohio, the conservative think tank the Buckeye Institute is spearheading many reforms also supported by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Due in large

part to this unprecedented cooperation, since 2007, at least 31 states have enacted bipartisan legislation designed to safely reduce prison populations. Between 2008 and 2013, dozens of states reduced both their incarceration rates and their crime rates, proving that smart reforms can make communities safer and also save taxpayers' money.

In Texas, where in 2007 the legislature adopted alternatives to incarceration for many low-level, nonviolent offenders, the prison population decreased by 14 percent and crime dropped by 29 percent, reaching the lowest rate the Lone Star State has enjoyed in 40 years. Both red and blue states have also reduced their prison populations by decreasing or eliminating mandatory minimums for crimes stemming from addiction. Oklahoma, a red state, has increased its focus on programs that help people with criminal records get the kinds of treatment and services that can make it easier for them to avoid drugs and crime. In 2015, Connecticut, a blue state, passed legislation intended to foster what its proponents called a "Second Chance Society," allowing judges to divert nonviolent offenders into mandatory rehabilitation or treatment programs. Crime in Connecticut has reached a 50-year low, and the state's prison population is the smallest it has been in two decades. And in the red state of Georgia, the legislature recently passed its third round of reforms, making the Peach State perhaps the most reform-minded in the country when it comes to incarceration. In recent years, under the leadership of Republican Governor Nathan Deal, Georgia has given judges more discretion in sentencing, instituted innovative programs to help ex-convicts reenter society, reduced its prison population by more than ten percent, and saved taxpayers roughly \$264 million.

Such bold leadership has yet to be matched at the federal level, but there have been some positive developments there, too. In 2008, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act, which expanded job-training and job-placement services for ex-convicts. In 2010, Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act, which eliminated disparities in sentencing between crimes involving crack and those involving powder cocaine—differences that had led to some severe racial inequalities, as black defendants (more often convicted of crack-related offenses) received far harsher punishments than white defendants (more often convicted of crimes relating to powder cocaine). And in 2013, in the absence of comprehensive sentencing reform legislation, Attorney General Eric Holder issued a memo declaring a major change

in Justice Department policy, instructing federal prosecutors to consider charging certain low-level, nonviolent offenders in drug cases in ways that would avoid mandatory minimum sentences. (The memo, however, did not carry the force of law or offer the permanence of reform legislation.)

By 2015, the country seemed poised for a decisive turn, as federal representatives and senators from both parties introduced a number of bills that, among other things, would have limited or reversed the growth of the criminal code, restored judges' discretion in sentencing for certain offenses, and increased the use of educational and vocational programs to reduce recidivism. Many of these bills built on policies that states had successfully pursued over the past decade.

The most comprehensive of these bills was the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. Among its features were reductions in mandatory minimum sentences for some drug and firearm-possession offenses (along with the establishment of new mandatory minimums for providing aid to terrorists and for some crimes of domestic violence), a provision that would make the Fair Sentencing Act retroactive, and new requirements for the Federal Bureau of Prisons to offer more programs to help inmates successfully reenter society.

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*Sentencing reform enjoys the backing of law enforcement officers and agencies all over the country.*

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The act was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee in November 2015 and appeared destined for passage. A poll conducted in January 2016 by my organization, the U.S. Justice Action Network, found broad support for the bill's measures among likely voters in battleground and bellwether states such as Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Large majorities of those we surveyed agreed that federal prisons house too many nonviolent offenders, and nearly 70 percent agreed that the federal government spends too much tax money keeping them behind bars. Nearly 75 percent favored changing the way nonviolent offenders are sentenced, allowing judges to use their discretion to impose a range of sentences instead of relying on one-size-fits-all mandatory minimums.

But over the course of 2016, vocal opposition to the measures emerged from a handful of Republican senators in the midst of a GOP primary season and presidential campaign that featured archaic "tough



on crime” posturing and appeals to restore “law and order.” With McConnell’s decision to delay bringing the legislation to the floor, the momentum of recent years appeared to come to a halt.

### **BETTER LAWS, MORE ORDER**

There are still reasons for optimism, however. The presidential campaign is finally over, and the GOP now controls the White House and Congress. Safe in their seats, some of the Republican lawmakers who initially opposed or failed to take a position on the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act might now be willing to take a second look; the bill’s supporters may also manage to convince Trump to back it or support similar efforts. One of the president’s greatest challenges will be to unify an American public suffering from the deep social divisions that have surfaced or widened in recent years. In addition to improving an often flawed and unjust system, criminal justice reform would create a badly needed point of unity and help build trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

Further, this legislation would help realize Trump’s desire to be a “law and order” president. After all, sentencing and corrections reforms enjoy the backing of law enforcement officers and agencies all over the country that would prefer for the justice system to focus on the most serious threats to society, such as mass shootings and acts of terrorism, rather than on low-level, nonviolent offenders. Law enforcement support for the legislation has come from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriffs’ Association, the National District Attorneys Association, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, and the Council of Prison Locals, which represents more than 28,000 federal prison guards.

The Trump administration should support sentencing reforms for low-level offenders that would free up prison beds and focus resources on the most dangerous criminals. The cost savings from sentencing reforms would allow for more vocational training, addiction counseling, and mental health treatment to help ex-convicts returning to society find jobs, support their families, and turn away from crime. The new administration can also work to curb government overreach and put more people to work by supporting legislation that would remove statutory and regulatory obstacles to employing former prisoners and that would seal the records of former prisoners who have stayed crime free for a significant amount of time. Such steps have been backed by

business groups in some conservative-leaning states, such as Kentucky and Louisiana, which struggle with a dearth of skilled labor.

Finally, the Trump administration can hold government accountable by backing federal incentives for states that safely decrease their prison populations and reconsider ineffective sentencing regimes. Such an initiative would represent a stark reversal of legislation signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994, which did just the opposite, offering federal dollars to states that imposed harsher criminal penalties and built more prisons, which contributed to the explosion of incarceration rates during the past two decades.

Many high-profile Republican leaders in Congress remain committed to passing comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation, including senators such as Cornyn, Grassley, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, and Mike Lee of Utah and representatives such as Ryan, Goodlatte, Trey Gowdy of South Carolina, and Jason Chaffetz of Utah. If Trump chooses to support reform or simply defer to congressional leadership on these issues, these Republicans could enjoy a wide-open field. And with Obama out of the picture, the bill might become more palatable to some Republicans who had found it politically difficult to support reforms backed by a president they opposed on almost every other issue. On the other hand, Trump's choice for attorney general, Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, might pose an obstacle: in the past, Sessions has resisted changes to mandatory minimum sentencing, although during his confirmation hearing in January, he pledged to "follow any law" that Congress passes. And perhaps the greatest challenge for advocates will be to ensure that criminal justice reform remains a top-tier issue during a time when fights over judicial nominations, the Affordable Care Act, and immigration will likely take center stage on Capitol Hill.

Meanwhile, large-scale reform packages are now moving forward in states such as Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and even McConnell's home state of Kentucky. At some point, so many states will have enacted policies that safely reduce prison populations, save money, and lower crime and recidivism rates that Congress will have no choice but to act. There's no reason for Washington to wait. 🌐

# High Stakes

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## The Future of U.S. Drug Policy

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*Mark A. R. Kleiman*

**M**any people enjoy the psychological effects of various chemicals. Any chemical can have unwanted side effects, especially when used often, in high doses, or in combination. There is always the risk that a user will lose control over his or her consumption, using too much or too often.

The likelihood of developing what is now called “substance use disorder” varies by person and by drug; except in the case of nicotine, the victims of this disorder are generally a small minority among users. Most people unfortunate enough to develop a drug problem recover without formal intervention, although recovery typically comes after some struggle and several failed attempts.

But an even smaller minority faces graver problems. Their attempts to cut back fail because of withdrawal symptoms or persistent cravings; they have become addicted. Addicts, although relatively few in number, account for most of the damage done by drugs.

Some potentially habit-forming chemicals—including the two biggest killers, alcohol and tobacco—are legal to use and sell. Others are illegal or restricted to medical use by prescription. This tends to reduce the number of people who develop drug problems, but it also worsens the problems of those who do develop them. Making a drug illegal creates illicit markets and the need for enforcement, and can lead to violence.

The United States has a variety of legal and illegal drug markets, and more than its share of the evils of addiction, illicit trafficking, and drug-related incarceration. Two of those markets—those for

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*Must everybody get stoned? At the 420 Fest, Seattle, April 2013*

cannabis and opioids—will force themselves on the attention of the new administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, although for very different reasons.

Cannabis will be on the agenda because of the conflict between state policies and increasingly unpopular federal law. Last October, a Gallup poll found that public support for legalization had reached 60 percent, the highest level since Gallup began asking the question in 1969. In November, four states, including California, voted to allow cannabis sales without a medical recommendation. More than a fifth of all Americans now live in the eight states that issue permits to grow and sell cannabis—actions that federal law still defines as felonies.

This situation leads to absurd consequences. Some state-licensed cannabis businesses pay their state taxes with sacks of cash because money-laundering laws discourage banks from letting them have checking accounts. Respectable law firms file state regulatory applications to enable their clients to commit federal felonies. Somehow, federal law needs to adapt to the new realities.

Opioids—including both illicitly manufactured heroin and fentanyl compounds and prescription drugs such as oxycodone—are on the agenda for a much grimmer reason: the United States is facing a massive epidemic, with the rapidly rising death toll now great enough to contribute to falling overall life expectancies.



Current policies toward cannabis and opioids are equally unsustainable; the opioid problem is both more serious and harder to fix. Better cannabis policies would accommodate the movement toward cannabis legalization without going all the way to alcohol-style commercial availability; the goal would be to shrink the illicit market while damping the growth of cannabis use disorder and avoiding an upsurge in teenage use. Better opioid policies would curb the over-aggressive marketing and prescribing of opioids that helped create the current problem without going back to the days when patients suffered needlessly from untreated or undertreated pain; they would also improve addiction treatment and make it more widely available, and offer better therapy to those who suffer from chronic pain.

The new administration has great political flexibility; Trump has not committed to any specific cannabis or opioid policies. On the campaign trail, he promised to solve the opioid problem by stopping the flow of smuggled drugs and expanding treatment for opioid addicts. But the new administration will struggle to reconcile the latter with its commitment to repeal Obamacare, which greatly increased funding for drug treatment.

### **THE RISE OF BIG MARIJUANA?**

In 1992, illegal cannabis sales in the United States totaled about \$10 billion; in recent years, that figure has topped \$40 billion, making the market for cannabis by far the largest illicit drug market. In 1992, when polled, of those who said that they had used marijuana in the past month, only about nine percent reported daily or near-daily use. Today, that figure is 40 percent, or about eight million people; about half of them report the symptoms of substance use disorder, including failed attempts to cut back or quit.

Despite steady growth in public support for legalization, federal cannabis law has not changed in decades. But there have been dramatic developments at the state level. In addition to the eight states that now permit commercial sales, another 35 allow the sale or use of cannabis on medical recommendation, which also remains illegal under federal law.

The changes in state law have put the federal government in a bind. The states can't repeal federal laws, but the federal government can't enforce those laws without help from the states: 4,000 federal Drug Enforcement Administration agents cannot replace 500,000 state

and local police. The Justice Department could shut down state-licensed businesses by obtaining federal injunctions. But unless the states were willing to arrest growers and retailers, the federal government would simply be replacing taxed and regulated sales with untaxed and unregulated sales.

Even with the full cooperation of the states, mounting the enforcement effort required to suppress a \$40 billion illicit market is hard to imagine, given the overstrained criminal justice system and concerns about excessive incarceration. Even the current level of half a million arrests for cannabis possession every year strains the relationships between the police and the communities they serve, especially in high-crime minority neighborhoods. But that level is too low to seriously deter people from consuming cannabis: the risk of arrest per day of use is below one in 5,000.

Under President Barack Obama, federal agencies reluctantly acquiesced to the state-level cannabis legalization, except when state-licensed activity involved interstate sales, sales to minors, the use of weapons, or links to organized crime or terrorism. Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, Trump's nominee for attorney general, criticized the Obama administration for not enforcing the law; he also asserted that "good people don't smoke marijuana." But as attorney general, Sessions will face the same arithmetic that confronted Eric Holder, Obama's attorney general: his department doesn't have the manpower to enforce federal laws without help from the states.

Cannabis prohibition has broken down, probably beyond repair. But what has replaced it in the legalizing states is far from ideal. The slogan behind the new system—"Regulate marijuana like alcohol"—sounds sensible only to those who ignore how bad U.S. alcohol policy is. Thanks in part to low taxes and aggressive marketing, 16 million Americans suffer from alcohol use disorders, and about 90,000 people die from alcohol-related causes every year. The alcohol industry depends for most of its revenue on the minority of people who drink too much, and the industry's political clout ensures that public policy doesn't interfere much with the business of promoting and profiting from alcohol abuse.

Under the current version of legalization, the marijuana industry is likely to follow the same playbook: for-profit businesses will strive to

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*Cannabis prohibition  
has broken down,  
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create more and more of the heavy daily cannabis use that accounts for 80 percent or more of cannabis sales.

The right set of policies for marijuana would look less like the current policies on alcohol and more like those on tobacco, where taxes and regulations are designed to decrease smoking. High taxes, restrictions on marketing, and relentless antismoking messages have driven tobacco use down sharply—especially among minors—and it will continue to fall. But current state-level cannabis legalization features relatively low taxes, loose regulations, and minimal restrictions on marketing (except to minors). As legal marijuana production replaces illegal growing, cannabis prices will continue their rapid decline: adjusting for inflation and potency, today's cannabis produces about four times as much intoxication per dollar as it did a quarter century ago, and legal competition will drive prices lower still. Lower prices make it easier for casual users to slip into heavy use: good for the vendors, bad for the users.

A good alternative to full national legalization would be to change federal law to accommodate state-licensed cannabis sales, but only if the taxes and regulations that replaced state prohibitions were strict enough to prevent an acceleration in the rate of heavy use. The federal government could do this by using “policy waivers,” like those it now uses to allow state-level experiments with other policies. But legalizing cannabis without prompting a large increase in heavy use would require very different policies from those adopted so far in the legalizing states. At a minimum, it would require replacing taxation based on price—which means that taxes fall with market prices—with taxation based on potency. More radically, it might entail replacing a for-profit industry with co-ops, nonprofits, or state-operated retail stores.

For now, the current debate on legalization remains at the level of yes or no, with no intermediate options on the table. Proponents of legalization see no reason to compromise, while the remaining supporters of prohibition are holding out to the bitter end, hoping that the steady growth in support for legalization will somehow miraculously reverse. It's not that voters or officials have rejected the ideas about temperate cannabis policy developed by the tiny group of academic drug policy analysts; rather, those ideas have never been up for discussion.

If the federal government is ever going to move toward policies that support moderation, the time is now. Once California and the

other states where marijuana was recently legalized have created multi-billion-dollar commercial markets, potent political forces will resist any radical change.

### **AN AMERICAN EPIDEMIC**

The costs of inaction on opioid policy would be much higher. An estimated two million Americans suffer from opioid abuse disorders, and in 2015, 32,000 died of opioid overdoses—nearly as many as died in car crashes and more than twice the number killed in homicides.

The abuse of prescription opioids, including hydrocodone (sold as Vicodin or Lortab) and oxycodone (or Percodan, Percocet, and Oxycontin), began to grow rapidly in the early 1990s; the annual count of people reporting first-time nonmedical use of opioids rose from around 200,000 in 1992 to more than 2.4 million a decade later, exceeding the comparable figure for cannabis.

For the most part, those drugs were not smuggled into the country; they were prescribed by physicians and purchased legally from pharmacies. Encouraged by pharmaceutical manufacturers, physicians began to consider pain “the fifth vital sign” that they should monitor routinely, along with body temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rate, and to overrule concerns that the medical use of opioids would lead to dependency.

Rising supplies of prescribed opioids helped create a black market. Patients exchanged and sold unused pills; burglars stole them. Drug dealers began to recruit people to pose as patients and secure high-dosage prescriptions from as many physicians as possible. Drug-seeking patients learned that they could usually get a prescription just by rating their pain at seven or above on an arbitrary ten-point scale.

Prescription opioids penetrated populations left largely untouched by heroin. Finding heroin required finding a dealer, and dealers clustered in places where heroin was already common; the prescription drugs were available wherever there were physicians and drugstores. In some states, such as Florida, lax laws encouraged so-called pill mills, where doctors prescribed—and sometimes also dispensed—opioids to anyone willing to pay. The pills were less frightening than heroin and therefore more appealing. They came in measured doses in pill bottles, not as white powders of unknown composition in glassine bags. They were typically swallowed like normal medicines,



rather than snorted or injected. And they were available at a drugstore, or from an acquaintance who had a prescription, instead of from a dealer in a back alley.

But the two markets did not remain separate for long. A person addicted to prescription opioids whose need for the drug outstrips his or her budget may trade down to heroin—which costs about a quarter the dose-equivalent price of prescription opioids on the black market—or to the even cheaper, more potent, and more dangerous synthetics of the fentanyl class. Law enforcement efforts can have the unwanted side effect of accelerating the transition: when the police shut down a local pill mill, they rarely identify the users and help them get treatment, and heroin and fentanyl dealers are quick to move in to exploit the new business opportunity. On the other hand, if the police don't shut down pill mills, they risk swelling the number of prescription-opioid users who may later graduate to heroin or fentanyl.

## **PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE**

Policymakers and health-care providers have several options to tackle the opioid crisis. None offers a miracle cure, and each involves either spending money or imposing and enforcing regulations.

The quickest way to save lives is probably to expand access to “antagonist” drugs, which can bring overdose victims back from the brink of death. These drugs, such as naloxone (sold as Narcan), save thousands of lives every year. Naloxone is now available as a nasal spray, and it requires no medical training on the part of the person administering it. Changes in policy have made antagonists easier to obtain legally and have put them in the hands of police and emergency medical technicians, and aggressive public information campaigns have spread the word that an overdose is reversible if first responders (or the opioid user him- or herself, a friend, or a passerby) can administer an antagonist quickly.

But reversing an overdose is only a start; many users overdose more than once. Last April, for instance, naloxone was used to revive the music icon Prince; one week later, he overdosed again, with no one around this time to administer the antidote.

Getting opioid users into treatment and keeping them there requires hard work. Substitute drugs, such as methadone and buprenorphine, can relieve withdrawal symptoms and prevent overdoses, but regulatory

barriers and a lack of trained clinicians have made them hard to obtain. Methadone clinics, for example, are mostly located in big cities, where they sprang up in response to the last heroin epidemic; today, however, most users live in the suburbs, exurbs, small towns, or rural areas, far from the nearest clinic. Too much of the criminal justice system still insists on strict abstinence and rejects substitution therapy, despite overwhelming scientific evidence that it works. Many drug courts and probation and parole agencies, and most prisons and jails, refuse to let their clients and inmates use substitute drugs. And the substitutes alone aren't nearly as effective as substitution accompanied by high-quality psychosocial treatment, which not every prescriber of the substitutes is able or willing to provide.

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*Prescription opioids have penetrated populations left largely untouched by heroin.*

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Recent advances in substitution therapy, such as implants that avoid the need for daily dosing, are promising but expensive, and expanded access to treatment would have to be paid for. The same antagonist drugs that reverse overdoses can also be administered in long-acting formulations; a monthly injection can prevent a user from getting high even if he or she relapses, greatly reducing the risk of relapse. But these drugs, like the long-acting substitutes, cost more than \$1,000 per month.

Under the Affordable Care Act, drug treatment is one of the “essential health benefits” that public and private insurers are required to cover. Subsidies for private insurance through the ACA exchanges and the expansion of Medicaid have provided health coverage, including drug treatment, to about 20 million people who had previously been without it. Keith Humphreys, a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University, has called the ACA “the largest expansion of drug treatment in U.S. history,” and the official estimate is that it has improved access for 60 million people.

Trump and congressional Republicans have pledged to “repeal and replace” Obamacare. Last year, Representative Tom Price of Georgia, Trump's nominee for secretary of health and human services, put forward an alternative that removed the requirement for insurers to cover a specific set of benefits. Since people with drug problems are expensive to insure, under such a plan, insurers would presumably

revert to their previous practice of driving them away by offering no coverage, or inadequate coverage, for drug treatment. In addition, Price proposed cutting federal funding to subsidize private insurance and reversing the Medicaid expansion. That approach would make it hard to expand access to high-quality opioid treatment.

While objections to public spending are one barrier to expanding treatment, objections to government regulation—embodied in the Trump campaign’s promise to repeal two old regulations for every new one adopted—are a barrier to reducing the supply of diverted prescription pills. The current crisis is partly the result of inadequate regulation.

Much of the necessary power lies at the state, rather than the federal, level. State medical boards should be more aggressive in revoking the licenses of pill-peddling practitioners, instead of leaving the problem for the police to handle. Databases of opioid prescriptions (called Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, or PDMPs), which states are increasingly using, can help physicians and pharmacists spot pill-seeking patients, shrinking the supply of pills on the illicit market. But those databases are full of personal information that needs protecting; designing databases that are both secure and easy to use is difficult and expensive. Consulting a state’s PDMP also takes up clinicians’ scarce time, and without regulations or incentives to encourage their use, PDMPs won’t work.

None of these moves would address the availability of heroin and fentanyl. Indeed, if physicians deny users opioids, or if the price of illicit prescription opioids begins to rise as the supply falls, demand for heroin and fentanyl will rise, possibly raising death rates, at least in the short run. In 2014, deaths from overdosing on prescription opioids fell, but deaths from fentanyl overdoses almost doubled.

As long as there is demand, preventing those cheaper drugs from entering the country will be almost impossible. More than a million cargo containers cross the United States’ borders every month; any one of them could hold enough heroin to supply the country for that month or enough fentanyl to supply it for a year. Cracking down on the retail supply has become much harder since drug dealers started connecting with customers by cell phone rather than by loitering on street corners. Policing is expensive: annual police budgets nationwide total more than \$100 billion. Ramping up operations against opioids would require either spending more money or doing less of something else:

enforcing other drug laws or suppressing predatory crime, for example. Imprisoning more dealers would require letting other offenders out or reversing the widely desired decrease in the U.S. prison population, which now stands at five times its historical level and seven times the average rate of other rich democracies.

Cracking down on opioid prescribing could also make it much harder for people in genuine pain to receive relief. Opioids are often not the best way to manage pain, especially chronic, nonterminal pain: patients often need help changing patterns of work, stress, exercise, and diet. But too few health-care providers understand these approaches, and many insurers will not pay for them. Prescribing some pills is much cheaper than providing physical therapy.

A long-term solution would require better clinical practice and new drugs on the market both for pain relief and for opioid-dependency treatment. Buprenorphine, for example, a fairly cheap generic drug used in substitution therapy, can also relieve pain, and it carries a very low risk of overdose. But it is currently packaged and marketed primarily for treating opioid addiction and severe chronic pain; internists are more likely to prescribe the more dangerous hydrocodone or oxycodone. A drug company that wanted to make buprenorphine a routine pain drug would have to put a new formulation through a long, expensive regulatory process at the Food and Drug Administration, with no guarantee of regulatory success or sufficient clinical acceptance to recoup its investment.

The same is true of several promising drugs and formulations for drug treatment: someone has to pay to develop them, and right now there isn't enough financial reward to justify the gamble. The federal government could fill that gap, funding not only basic research (as it currently does) but also the clinical-trial process for drugs with high social value but limited profit potential.

Ultimately, the opioid epidemic, like all epidemics, will burn itself out: as the grim joke shared among medical residents goes, "All bleeding stops, eventually." But how many lives the epidemic takes, and how many it ruins, will depend on choices made today and tomorrow. The worst of the problem is almost certainly still to come. 🌐



# An Internet Whole and Free

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## Why Washington Was Right to Give Up Control

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*Kal Raustiala*

**W**ho should control the Internet? That was the question the Obama administration sought to answer last fall, when the U.S. Department of Commerce ended its long-standing contract with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. ICANN is the nonprofit that performs the small but significant function of governing the Internet's system of website and domain names—managing its address book, so to speak. The Internet began as a project of the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1960s, and since its creation in the late 1990s, ICANN had remained under U.S. supervision. By bringing the contract to a close, President Barack Obama freed ICANN to act autonomously.

The Republican response was apoplectic. “Like Jimmy Carter gave away the Panama Canal, Obama is giving away the Internet,” Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said. John Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the UN, characterized it as “a mistake of such colossal proportions that you would have thought we’d have a huge debate about it in this country.” Stephen Miller, a campaign aide to Donald Trump, lamented, “Internet freedom will be lost for good, since there will be no way to make it great again once it is lost.”

Such criticism was not just hyperbolic; it was also fundamentally misplaced. The Obama administration did not give away the Internet; what it did was relinquish a vestige of U.S. control over a domain that had long since expanded beyond the mastery of any one entity. And

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by reducing its oversight, the United States made a savvy decision that will protect the very features of the Internet nearly everyone cares about most: its openness, diversity, and fundamental resilience.

What Obama's critics miss is that as the Internet grew into a truly global resource, so did pushback against the United States' relationship with ICANN. In the view of many governments around the world, it was well past time not just for the United States to cede its role as steward of the address book but also, more broadly, for a multilateral group of states to assume greater control over the Internet.

That is a dangerous aspiration, however, for it could undo the stability and openness that make the Internet so valuable—which is why the Obama administration sought to prevent it. Rather than weaken U.S. influence over the Internet, permanently severing ties with ICANN has diminished the specter of greater state control, helping protect an essential forum for global politics, culture, and economics from those who wish to change its very nature.

## **THE DARK AGES OF THE INTERNET**

To understand the merits of devolving more power to ICANN, and what it portends for the future of the digital realm, it's necessary to take a brief dive into the history of the Internet. The world's largest and most spectacular communications technology began in the 1960s as a Defense Department project called the ARPANET. A tiny system with only a few nodes, the ARPANET was designed neither for mass use nor for commercial application. The first message was sent from the University of California, Los Angeles, to Stanford University in the fall of 1969. (It was “lo”—the programmers had been typing “login” when the system crashed.)

Five decades later, the Internet reaches around the globe and boasts some 3.5 billion users and counting. Ensuring that all of them can reliably find what they are looking for requires a method of standardizing and organizing Internet Protocol, or IP, addresses—the labels that allow someone who types into his or her browser, say, “foreignaffairs.com” to reach the website of *Foreign Affairs*. Without allowing this ability, the Internet would be not a comprehensive, globe-encircling web but an unreliable series of Balkanized, and perhaps censored, mini-networks. As arcane as it may seem, the responsibility for creating and organizing this address book comes with substantial political and legal powers, such as the authority to create

new national domain suffixes (think “.tibet,” “.isis,” or “.california”) and the power to enforce intellectual property rights online.

Well into the 1980s, few people had the ability or the desire to go online—it was mostly just a small coterie of engineers, academics, and hobbyists who did—and so the Internet’s address book remained thin. In fact, the early Internet was so small that one man, the computer scientist Jon Postel, essentially ran the address book from his office in Los Angeles. But in the early 1990s, the Internet began to change rapidly. Spurred by the creation of webpages, user-friendly browsers, and dial-up service providers, the Internet transformed into a mainstream commercial and social space. Domain names and websites skyrocketed in value; ownership disputes followed close behind. These disputes centered not only on the question of who had the right to use a given domain name but also, and most important, on who controlled the right to award one.

Because the Internet evolved organically, with little thought that it would become a major economic and social resource, basic questions such as these were surprisingly hard to answer. In 1995, the National Science Foundation, which had developed its own ARPANET-like network, called a conference to get to the bottom of the matter. Who, if anyone, really controlled the Internet? Military officials argued that because the Defense Department had funded the original ARPANET, it owned the Internet, too, and, therefore, the address book.

Other officials were skeptical. The modern Internet had many of the same technical features as the ARPANET, but in its scale, scope, and social utility, it bore almost no resemblance. The federal government had never previously asserted that its initial funding should give it legal ownership over the Internet. Moreover, it possessed no statutory authority over the awarding of domain names. No one disputed that the Internet had been launched in the United States with federal funding. But the precise scope of the government’s legal authority was extremely hazy.

## **THE BIRTH OF ICANN**

By the late 1990s, Internet use was growing explosively, and such uncertainty had become untenable. The administration of President Bill Clinton argued that the solution was simple: the Internet should be run by the private sector. U.S. adversaries such as China, Iran, and Russia disagreed. Keen to control this novel communications system, they began to argue that it ought to be governed by them, or at least by the UN in a multilateral fashion.

One UN agency, the Geneva-based International Telecommunication Union, which manages the radio frequency spectrum and establishes standards for communications services, viewed the Internet as a natural part of its portfolio. Having seen its powers diminished by the deregulation of the telephone industry, the ITU was searching for a new *raison d'être*. It found one in the Internet. As a global resource, the ITU contended, the Internet ought to be governed globally, not by one country.

But when, in 1997, the ITU sought to insert itself into Internet governance by hosting a “signing ceremony” for

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*The Obama administration  
did not give away the  
Internet.*

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an agreement on domain names negotiated among several nongovernmental organizations, it generated substantial pushback from the United States. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright blasted the ITU for holding “a global meeting involving an unauthorized expenditure of resources and concluding with a quote international agreement unquote.”

The Clinton administration feared that if the Internet were governed by a multilateral body such as the ITU—one that states firmly controlled—its best features could be lost. It would become more vulnerable to censorship and control by governments with weak track records on freedom of expression and little tolerance for political dissent. And it might ultimately splinter into a series of regional or national networks rather than remain one global Internet.

To try to thwart the increasing attempts to assert multilateral control, in 1998, Clinton set in motion a new policy. Rather than increase federal control over the Internet, he sought to devolve authority to the private sector. And so he instructed the Commerce Department to issue a call for proposals for a new body to which the U.S. government could transfer day-to-day management of the address book.

The result was ICANN. The organization operated under a contract issued by the Commerce Department, which delegated to the group the responsibility for managing the domain name system and, more broadly, required it to keep the Internet running smoothly. ICANN could not alter existing policies without federal approval; the initial contract even specified which individuals at ICANN would have responsibility for various tasks. Over time, the contract granted ICANN more autonomy, and by the end, the U.S. government’s role



had become largely symbolic. But it never backed down on one constraint: ICANN had to remain headquartered in the United States.

ICANN's governance structure is Byzantine, but it succeeds in gathering together a strikingly wide range of voices. A nonprofit incorporated under California law, ICANN is financially self-sufficient, having earned nearly \$200 million in revenue from user fees and domain name auctions during the last fiscal year alone. It is led by a board of directors—currently chaired by Steve Crocker, a computer scientist who helped develop the ARPANET—and a CEO. Representatives of various interest groups, such as intellectual property owners and noncommercial Internet users, help select and advise members of the board and, in some cases, develop policies. Separate advisory committees also guide policy. The most significant of these is the Governmental Advisory Committee, which includes state representatives and an array of international organizations. Further broadening the scope of input, all of ICANN's policy proposals are open for public comment.

By creating ICANN, the Clinton administration chose to embrace even more firmly the existing, if somewhat ad hoc, tradition of “multi-stakeholder” Internet governance. Unlike traditional multilateral governance, this method is not state-driven; instead, it includes a diverse mix of businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and academics working alongside governments. The White House found the approach attractive because U.S. technology companies, academics, and nonprofits already dominated Internet governance, and it fit with the privatizing spirit of the times. But above all, the administration recognized that an Internet run by a wide range of public and private actors was more likely to be managed well, and more likely to remain open, global, and free, than one run simply by governments. Indeed, the Obama administration's choice to end what remained of direct U.S. oversight over ICANN represented the culmination of Clinton's earlier decision.

ICANN has its critics, and over time, it has tweaked its bylaws to improve its accountability and transparency and to rein in what some have seen as an overly powerful and insular board. But much like what Winston Churchill said about democracy, ICANN's convoluted approach is probably the worst form of Internet governance—except for all the others.

## **THE PERILS OF MULTILATERAL CONTROL**

Without question, the Internet has thrived since ICANN's creation. The last two decades have witnessed spectacular growth in the digital



*The Internet with Chinese characteristics: at the Wuzhen summit, November 2016*

domain. But despite ICANN's success, the United States' continuing special role only intensified the desire of other states to gain more control. At a 2012 conference facilitated by the ITU in Dubai, for instance, China, Russia, and other countries sought to negotiate an accord that would introduce rules requiring parties sending digital information to pay to reach users and that would generally enhance the ability of governments to filter and throttle content. The United States, along with 54 other countries, including Australia, India, Japan, and most of Europe, refused to sign it. But it was clear that calls for multilateral governance were mounting.

Multilateral control may seem an equitable arrangement, but it would risk ending the Internet as we know it. Many governments around the world fear the free flow of information that the Internet fosters, and they would have an easier time censoring content on a multilaterally governed Internet. Invoking sovereignty, they could block services, disable websites, and thwart political opposition. At the Dubai conference, for instance, governments proposed innocuous-sounding rules over spam that the United States and its allies feared would provide governments with new ways to control mass social mobilization.

As the campaign for multilateral governance gained momentum, the Obama administration faced a choice: Should it extend its relationship with ICANN in an attempt to maintain the United States' traditional

role as steward of the Internet, and thereby risk encouraging greater efforts to establish multilateral control? Or should it set the organization free? The administration chose the latter option and accelerated what had been planned since the Clinton years: a handoff to ICANN that would further embed multistakeholder governance and preserve the fundamental structure that so many value in the digital domain.

Adding to the sense of urgency, in 2013, Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency contractor, released classified documents revealing the NSA's widespread surveillance of Americans and foreigners, sometimes undertaken with the participation of U.S. technology and communications firms. The NSA's programs had no direct connection to ICANN, but their disclosure raised hard questions about how much foreigners could trust the U.S. government and U.S. technologies, which dominate the digital domain. In April 2014, Brazil hosted a conference on Internet governance known as NETmundial, at which the country's then president, Dilma Rousseff—who, as Snowden revealed, had herself been a target of NSA surveillance—gave a forceful opening address in which she declared a “one-sided, unilateral Internet” untenable and called for all governments to participate in Internet policy on an equal footing. Many participants shared her sense of anger, but their outrage had been softened by a well-timed statement by the U.S. government. Just a month before the meeting, the Commerce Department had announced that it would soon allow ICANN to operate independently.

## **SETTING THE INTERNET FREE**

On October 1, 2016, the Obama administration fulfilled that promise when it allowed the Commerce Department contract to expire—although not without a flurry of last-minute court filings by Republicans aimed at stopping the transition. For many in the Internet community, the transfer marked the triumph of an Internet whole and free over one fractured and controlled.

Despite Republican claims to the contrary, the move also represented a win for the United States. Since ICANN's inception, U.S. interests have been well served by the organization's inclusive approach to Internet governance. ICANN has many flaws, to be sure, and it does not always side with the U.S. government. (The George W. Bush administration fought the creation of an .xxx domain, for example, but ultimately failed to block it.) That is all to the good: if ICANN

consistently favored U.S. interests, it would lose legitimacy and stop serving as an effective check on the ambitions of many states, such as China and Russia, to assert greater state control.

This threat has not abated. In November 2016, China held its own global summit on Internet governance, which President Xi Jinping attended. Xi declared that China would continue to promote “equitable global Internet governance” and repeated his call for “cyber-sovereignty”: code for greater government control over all things digital.

This is the alternative vision for the Internet that the Obama administration sought to neuter. At the end of the day, the Internet is not virtual but quite physical. It relies on cables, routers, and servers overseen by a panoply of firms—all of which are subject to the jurisdiction of the country in which they reside or operate. Ultimately, the people who make the machinery of the Internet hum are vulnerable to state action. They would be all the more so if like-minded states were able to work in concert to put an end to an open and global Internet.

That was one risk of insisting that the U.S. government preserve its special role. Another was that some kind of multilateral system of management could arise without U.S. consent. These risks are hard to quantify, but they are also hard to dismiss. Far better for the United States to keep the Internet relatively free and unfettered, and let go of the steering wheel.

Indeed, in many respects, the U.S. government’s strategy of embracing a multistakeholder framework to lock in its basic preferences on Internet governance contains parallels to U.S. grand strategy after World War II. U.S. leaders in that era understood that the United States could best sustain its newfound superpower status by creating a global order that provided public goods, reduced some of its policy autonomy, and offered participation to weaker states. The result was a raft of cooperative international institutions, from the UN to the World Bank.

For the Internet, likewise, devolving power to a diverse group of actors that share the United States’ basic values furthers U.S. interests. It does so by ensuring that the existing online order becomes self-sustaining, kept alive not through U.S. power but through the shared effort of the unique mix of corporations, technical wizards, digital evangelists, and government regulators who have run the Internet for over two decades—and who will work to safeguard it for generations to come. 🌐



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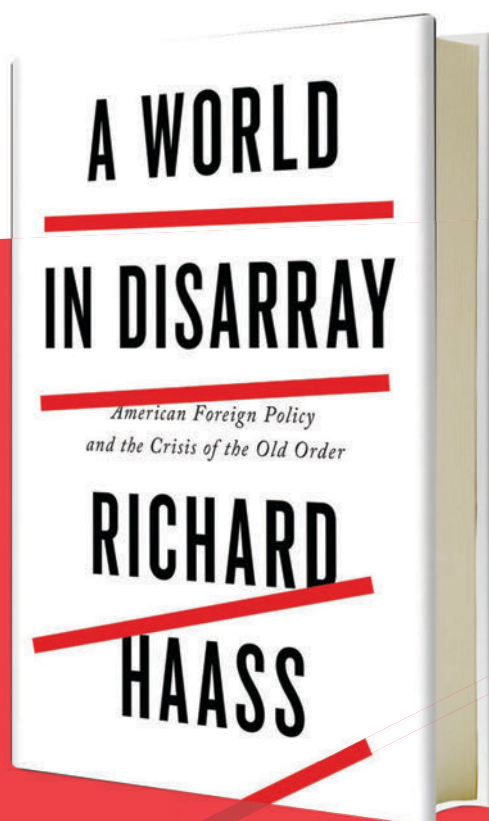
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REVIEWS & RESPONSES



*Europe’s leaders must not forget the principles of human rights that have underpinned their countries’ asylum policies for decades.*

*—Elizabeth Collett*

Destination: Europe	O Brotherhood, Where Art Thou?
Elizabeth Collett	Ahmed Abu Zeid; Steven A. Cook
150	164
The Renminbi Goes Global	Recent Books
Barry Eichengreen	167
157	

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# Destination: Europe

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## Managing the Migrant Crisis

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*Elizabeth Collett*

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*The New Odyssey: The Story of the Twenty-First-Century Refugee Crisis*  
BY PATRICK KINGSLEY. Liveright, 2017, 368 pp.

*Cast Away: True Stories of Survival From Europe's Refugee Crisis*  
BY CHARLOTTE McDONALD-GIBSON. New Press, 2016, 352 pp.

**T**he dramatic surge in the number of refugees and migrants that arrived in Europe over the course of 2015 should not have come as a surprise. For anyone paying attention to the civil war in Syria—as well as to the festering conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen—it was clear that the crisis had been a long time coming. Yet the arrival of so many, and in so chaotic and desperate a manner, caught European policymakers off-guard. As more than one million people entered Europe, primarily by crossing the Mediterranean, the fabled solidarity underpinning the European project began to crumble. As some governments scrambled to construct makeshift reception centers in resorts and army barracks, others looked on

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with indifference, and still more did so with alarm. European politicians turned on one another, blaming those who had failed to manage their borders, those who had supposedly encouraged migrants with their hospitality, and those who had done nothing at all.

Last March, shortly after Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia closed their borders, shutting the so-called western Balkan refugee route, the EU struck a deal with Turkey. Ankara would take back migrants who had reached Greece and crack down on the migrant-smuggling industry that had taken root along the Aegean coast. In return, the EU would pay Turkey six billion euros to host the millions of refugees already displaced in the country and accelerate talks on visa-free travel for Turkish nationals to the EU and, in the longer term, on EU accession for Turkey. Numerous observers argued that the deal violated international law: Turkey, they said, was not yet a safe country for refugees, a claim strengthened by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's crackdown on dissent and jailing of journalists and political opponents.

The only credible justification for the deal was that it was necessary to give the EU time to develop a sustainable internal response. Yet as the urgency of the crisis has ebbed, European officials have squandered the breathing room the deal gave them and reverted to the same policies they pursued before the crisis, including yet another attempt to reform the dysfunctional Dublin Regulation, which states that the EU country in which asylum seekers first arrive must weigh their claims and then either host or return them.

Despite all the frenzied activity by policymakers, thousands of migrants still try to cross the central Mediterranean

each month, even during the winter; the EU is back where it was two years ago. Those displaced from the broken states of the Middle East and South Asia see few long-term alternatives but to attempt to reach Europe through whatever openings they can find in the continent's southeast. Meanwhile, the plight of migrants in Greece and Italy remains dire, with thousands crammed into overcrowded reception centers. If the deal with Turkey collapses, as many observers predict it will, Greece will be stretched beyond its still limited capacity to manage arrivals.

In some ways, it is not surprising that the EU's institutions have failed to rise to the challenge. On every issue, the union must reach consensus among more than two dozen states with divergent priorities and differing domestic political constraints. And EU politicians often seem more intent on settling scores between their respective countries than on crafting effective policy.

Meanwhile, policymakers can often forget the plight of the individual men, women, and children who have migrated. Two new books, both by journalists, attempt to redress this. *The New Odyssey*, by Patrick Kingsley, and *Cast Away*, by Charlotte McDonald-Gibson, chronicle the uncertainties and fears of the courageous, desperate, and sometimes foolhardy voyagers. They offer an important rejoinder to the idea, widespread across Europe, that such journeys are acts of pure opportunism. For many migrants, the decision to leave home, in the words of the Nigerian academic Aderanti Adepoju, exchanges "misery without hope for misery with hope."

In 2017, as crucial elections loom in the Netherlands, France, and Germany,

the nature of the crisis will change. It will no longer be primarily a matter of numbers and state capacity. Instead, it will become a test of the European project's liberal values and of the EU's commitment to the international system for protecting refugees that many of its member states have championed for more than half a century. The EU will no longer be able to defer hard questions.

## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

To write *The New Odyssey*, Kingsley interviewed people in 17 countries, stringing together vivid snapshots of migrants, people smugglers, advocates, and, occasionally, policymakers. He returns throughout the book to the story of Hashem, a refugee who travels from Syria to Egypt, Italy, and, eventually, Sweden. As *The Guardian's* first "migration correspondent," Kingsley has witnessed hundreds of migrants' journeys over the past few years and has delved into the complex machinery of smuggling that facilitates them.

The book brings home some of the mundanity of these lengthy voyages, but also the ingenuity of the travelers. In the western Balkans, Kingsley describes groups of young men sharing cigarettes and cracking jokes as they pick their way across the muddy terrain. Hashem, meanwhile, travels by train across northern Europe, hiding behind newspapers written in languages that he cannot read to escape the scrutiny of train guards.

Like Kingsley, McDonald-Gibson focuses on harrowing individual stories, but she does so in greater depth, following just five migrants on their journeys to Europe. One of them, Sina, is a pregnant Eritrean woman desperate to



find a better future for her unborn child. A 24-year-old middle-class chemical engineer, she stands in sharp contrast to the media's caricatures of the migrants as impoverished and uneducated.

McDonald-Gibson's book thoroughly examines the forces that impel her characters to move and the personal conflicts they face as they make their decisions. An experienced foreign correspondent, McDonald-Gibson displays a strong grasp of regional geopolitics and the European policies and politics in which her protagonists are entangled. Her detailed narrative of the oppressive circumstances in Eritrea, for example, where the government forces people into indefinite military service, sheds light on a country that has become the single largest source of migrants from Africa but that Western media tend to overlook. Although the overall recognition rate of asylum claims from Eritrean nationals reaches around 90 percent in Europe, she notes that countries such as Denmark and the United Kingdom have started to dispute these asylum seekers' accounts of the conditions they face at home, and the United Kingdom now recognizes far fewer Eritreans as refugees. Meanwhile, in Italy, the conditions that greet asylum seekers are so poor that Eritreans try to avoid making their claims there.



Governments have understood that generosity has a cost; indirect policies of deterrence are increasingly prevalent.

### **BALANCING ACT**

In their attention to individual stories, these books indirectly illuminate why policymakers have struggled to resolve the crisis. To function effectively, immigration systems must create policies that are broadly applicable to all arrivals. But for the individual migrants themselves, with their widely varying experiences, blanket EU policies can seem arbitrary and authoritarian, especially when their fates often depend on the whims of particular officials. Balancing humanitarian responsibilities with the need to manage migration, while heeding the desires and fears of European publics, has become a defining challenge for the EU's liberal democracies.

Given these difficulties, people across the political spectrum have tended to



oversimplify the apparent policy choices, boiling them down to an all-or-nothing decision: borders should be open or closed. At times, both authors, and particularly Kingsley, fall prey to this kind of thinking. In his policy prescriptions, for instance, Kingsley neglects to contend with some of the complex trade-offs that have made the crisis so difficult for officials to solve. He points out,

correctly, that when countries close their borders, they often simply divert the flow of refugees rather than reduce the overall numbers—an example of the beggar-thy-neighbor policies that have defined much of the European reaction to the crisis over the past year. But like many who advocate a more welcoming approach, he also fails to engage deeply with some of the challenges posed by more porous borders.

Kingsley's primary policy prescription is that the EU can solve the crisis only by establishing legal means for would-be refugees and migrants to reach Europe, such as an organized system of mass resettlement. "Why make us do all this trip?" a Syrian refugee asks Kingsley near the border between Croatia and Slovenia. "Just organize it, give people visas so they can come on the plane. If you don't, people will keep coming."

Kingsley is right that industrialized states should take in more people from countries overwhelmed by refugees, such as Kenya, Lebanon, and Turkey. But there's little evidence that such moves will deter irregular migration, especially in the short term. Kingsley ignores critical questions, such as how policymakers should choose whom to resettle, and he fails to grapple seriously with why Europe has not adopted such a policy already, preferring to blame Europe's inaction on the immorality of its leaders. And both Kingsley and McDonald-Gibson make only passing reference to security concerns and the awkward reality that terrorists have exploited unmanaged migration flows: two of the nine assailants involved in the Paris attacks in November 2015 probably arrived in Europe by boat.

Such attacks do not justify governments' decisions to build walls or refuse asylum, but it is naive to not acknowledge the risks that come with allowing unidentified people to cross borders at will.

## EUROPEAN DILEMMAS

The year ahead will be a difficult one for the EU. The deal with Turkey remains fragile, refugees and migrants remain in limbo on both sides of Europe's borders (recent estimates suggest there could be as many as 300,000 would-be migrants in Libya, for example), and voters are flocking to populist parties, driven in part by concerns over immigration. European policymakers will have to engage with some fundamental questions that they have so far avoided answering. Will the EU remain committed to its founding liberal principles? Can the EU preserve freedom of movement without reaching common ground on asylum policies? And what is the future of the global system of international protection for refugees, as some of the strongest champions of the current approach start looking seriously for alternatives?

In 2017, the EU will have to decide whether, and how, it will continue to protect refugees. The question has become unavoidable for two reasons. First, several newer EU member states, notably the Visegrad Four—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia—have effectively repudiated their commitment to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. In a policy known as “effective solidarity,” they have insisted that hosting refugees is for other countries and not for them—even though they accepted the responsibility to do so under the Common European Asylum System when they joined the union in

2004. McDonald-Gibson points out the irony of central and eastern Europeans vilifying asylum seekers even as their own countries' emigrant citizens are denigrated across western Europe, where millions of Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, and others have gone to work in the past decade.

But if EU countries fail to manage their asylum policies together, they will undermine the so-called Schengen system, which allows EU citizens to travel within the Schengen zone without passports. (Indeed, the relationship between asylum rules and the freedom of movement seemed so obvious to veteran EU officials that they thought it was unnecessary to formally clarify the link in the treaties that the Visegrad countries signed when they joined the union—an oversight they have come to regret.) If member states cannot trust one another to assume similar responsibilities with respect to border management, asylum, immigration, and security, they will be more likely to prioritize narrow national interests, as they did when they reinstated temporary border controls across the EU in 2015.

Second, those member states that ostensibly remain committed to protecting refugees, such as Austria, Germany, Italy, and even Malta, have begun to argue that the current system, in which asylum seekers must set foot in an EU country in order to claim protection, fuels the lucrative smuggling industry and discriminates against those who are too poor or weak to reach the continent. They have proposed “external processing”: corralling people in neighboring countries and offering resettlement to those deemed worthy, thereby providing refugees with safer, legal routes to

Europe. This approach has gained traction since the EU-Turkey deal, and policymakers are scanning North Africa for other partners with whom they can strike similar agreements, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and even Libya.

Although human rights groups have long advocated that the EU should expand legal pathways to Europe, they vehemently oppose external processing, arguing that to turn individuals away from Europe is both an abnegation of the right to claim asylum and a violation of human rights. In the model of external processing that European countries are currently discussing, non-EU partners would need to play a strong role in “pulling back” boats to their territory, hosting camps, and managing returns of migrants, a role that may prove beyond their existing capacity. Various governments, including Berlin and London, had made similar proposals over the past 15 years, but until now, such measures were always regarded as a step too far. Today, however, leaders believe that their political futures hinge on stemming migrant flows across the Mediterranean, no matter the diplomatic or financial cost.

If European countries turn to external processing, it may prove a watershed moment for the global refugee protection system. If Europe decides to focus on the resettlement of refugees as part of an external-processing model, rather than automatically assessing the claims of those who manage to cross its external borders, the system will risk becoming even more vulnerable to political pressure: a government could terminate a program at any moment. In the United States, for example, following the Paris attacks in November 2015, the governors

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of 31 states vowed to refuse any refugees, citing security concerns.

And external processing may not prove to be the panacea that Europe's leaders hope: the EU-Turkey deal—the template on which governments wish to base any future plans of this sort—suggests that the EU would struggle to manage such a system while maintaining the principles of international protection. It has little experience working on the frontlines of immigration and asylum policy and tends to view effective planning as a mere political afterthought. The experience of Greece, which has become something of a laboratory for external processing, has demonstrated that without the capacity or infrastructure necessary to manage thousands of people, the conditions can rapidly become inhumane. Even the Australian government, whose model several European governments have hailed, has yet to address the degrading conditions in its external-processing centers in Manus and Nauru, despite huge investments.

Any system for external processing would also depend on the willingness of EU member states to take in those refugees whom the union invited in to be resettled. The EU would need to find a way to compel European governments to maintain their commitments beyond a single political cycle; the reluctance of states such as Hungary to even contemplate hosting refugees suggests this would prove difficult.

But perhaps the biggest problem with external processing is that by striking expensive political deals with its neighbors, the EU would risk making itself beholden to states whose leaders may exploit their advantage. Erdogan's frequent threats to terminate the

EU-Turkey deal, for example, have made European governments think twice before they criticize his increasing authoritarianism. European governments would need to announce clear redlines in advance regarding whom they will deal with, and on what basis, and preserve the ability to walk away.

External processing should not be condemned out of hand; the status quo—sea journeys that imperil thousands every day—is untenable, and the Common European Asylum System needs drastic reform. But the EU should not undertake the policy lightly: it must remember that any fundamental overhaul of asylum policy will require detailed planning, a long-term commitment to resettlement, and a recognition that such a policy will yield broader geopolitical consequences. And Europe's leaders must not forget the principles of human rights that have underpinned their countries' asylum policies for decades—and that lie at the core of the European project itself. 🌐

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# The Renminbi Goes Global

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## The Meaning of China's Money

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*Barry Eichengreen*

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*Gaining Currency: The Rise of the Renminbi*

BY ESWAR PRASAD. Oxford University Press, 2016, 344 pp.

*The People's Money: How China Is Building a Global Currency*

BY PAOLA SUBACCHI. Columbia University Press, 2016, 256 pp.

**L**ast October, the International Monetary Fund officially added China's currency, the renminbi, to the basket that makes up its Special Drawing Rights, the reserve asset in which the IMF denominates its loans to governments. Until then, only the U.S. dollar, the euro, the British pound, and the Japanese yen had enjoyed this exalted status. The addition of the renminbi to the SDR basket occasioned much celebration in China. Lu Jian, vice president of the Guangdong Guangken Rubber Group, hailed the event as a "historic moment." The People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's central bank,

announced that the move was "an affirmation of the success of China's economic development and results of the reform and opening up of the financial sector." As far as many Chinese were concerned, the IMF's move signaled that the renminbi had become a leading global currency, befitting one of the world's leading economies.

But some independent observers suggested that China's official reception greatly exaggerated the significance of the event. After all, SDRs are little more than the accounting units in which the IMF conducts its transactions. There is no private market in SDRs. They are not used by importers and exporters to invoice and settle trade deals. Nor are they used in private financial transactions. The importance of adding the renminbi to the SDR basket, in this view, was more symbolic than real.

Still, symbols matter. In this case, they matter to Chinese policymakers, who in recent years have been making a concerted push to "internationalize" the renminbi by promoting its use as a unit of account, means of payment, and store of value for banks, firms, and governments undertaking international transactions. Since 2009, internationalizing the renminbi has been an explicit goal of Chinese policy. Beijing therefore celebrated the renminbi's addition to the SDR basket as evidence that it was making real progress in this direction.

China's ambitions notwithstanding, the U.S. dollar remains unchallenged as the dominant international currency. The dollar accounts for more than 60 percent of the foreign exchange reserves held by central banks worldwide. Nearly 45 percent of all foreign exchange market transactions involve dollars. Virtually every transaction in the global oil market

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is denominated in dollars. Put simply, the dollar reigns supreme. So why would China attempt to challenge the dollar's dominance, or even try to establish the renminbi as an alternative global currency?

In their recent books, the economists Eswar Prasad and Paola Subacchi set out to answer this question. Both authors take pains to place the attempt to internationalize the renminbi in its historical context. (Prasad reminds readers, for example, that China is no currency neophyte: it was the first country in the world to use paper money.) And both use China's effort as a lens through which to view the bigger picture of the country's ongoing economic and financial reforms.

Both authors also caution against exaggerated claims. Although Beijing has worked hard to encourage the international use of the renminbi, its progress should not be overstated. Renminbi-denominated claims still account for only a tiny fraction—around one percent—of the foreign exchange reserves held by the world's central banks. Although businesses now use the renminbi to pay for about ten percent of all global exports and imports, up from essentially zero a decade ago, most of those payments stem from China's own trade—including trade with Hong Kong, which is not exactly a foreign country. Meanwhile, the renminbi's share of the turnover in the global foreign exchange market stands at only two percent, according to the most recent Bank for International Settlements survey, conducted in April 2016. And according to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), although the renminbi ranks as the fifth most frequently used currency in financial

transactions, renminbi-based transactions still account for just 1.86 percent of the value of all global payments.

If China really wants to move the dial and achieve more than symbolic progress on renminbi internationalization, it will have to move much faster on a set of broader economic and regulatory reforms. And it will also need to consider a less centralized approach to economic policymaking—a prospect that seems to hold little appeal for the country's current leadership. All those changes would have to take place during a time when the international environment has become more uncertain, thanks in part to the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president. So although China has managed to upgrade the renminbi's status, the road to further progress looks long and hard.

## **DOLLAR DEPENDENCE**

When asked why Beijing is trying to turn the renminbi into a global currency, many in China have a ready answer: a first-class country should have a first-class currency. But beneath this nationalist sentiment lie other, more practical motives. Chinese officials see internationalizing the renminbi as a way to free themselves from dependence on the dollar. As long as Chinese banks and firms conduct the bulk of their cross-border business in dollars, they face potential losses every time the dollar-renminbi exchange rate changes. Until now, Chinese authorities have heavily managed the exchange rate so as to limit those fluctuations. But this is bound to change in the future, since with financial development and opening come larger capital inflows and outflows—and the need to let the exchange rate adjust as a buffer against their economic and financial effects.



*Mao money, more problems: counting notes in Huabei, China, June 2012*

Dependence on the dollar also exposes China to strategic risks. The fact that so many trade and financial transactions are settled in dollars gives the U.S. government leverage over the international payment system. After Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014, Chinese officials watched with trepidation as the United States, the EU, and a number of NATO members imposed financial sanctions on Russia that, among other things, made it impossible to use credit cards issued by Russian banks outside Russia. That measure was enforceable only because such cards relied on dollar-based payment networks operated by U.S. firms such as Visa and Mastercard. The United States and its allies were also able to threaten Russia with exclusion from SWIFT, the electronic network that settles the vast majority of cross-border financial

transactions, which are mainly conducted in dollars. This gave China pause and stiffened its resolve to develop an alternative international payment system not dependent on dollars or subject to disruption by the United States.

Finally, some in China, including officials at the PBOC, see renminbi internationalization as a means of encouraging wider economic and financial reform. Foreigners will embrace the renminbi only if they can buy and sell it freely. In practice, this means that they must be able to engage in financial transactions in China itself, where the vast majority of renminbi-denominated financial assets reside. Beijing will therefore have to lift the restrictions it has long placed on foreigners (and Chinese citizens) who want to conduct cross-border financial transactions in China.



## UNDER PRESSURE

Relaxing controls on financial transactions would allow more capital to flow into and out of China. To cope with that greater volatility, Beijing would need to complete additional financial reforms. The government would have to upgrade its supervisory and regulatory regimes to prevent banks and other financial firms from borrowing excessively and becoming overleveraged. It would have to strengthen corporate governance to prevent Chinese enterprises from incurring too many short-term debts denominated in foreign currencies. Beijing would need to fully liberalize interest rates to eliminate artificial differences between onshore and offshore rates, which might encourage capital flight. And the PBOC would need to adjust its monetary policy more freely in response to changes in the direction of capital flows.

In their efforts to internationalize the renminbi, the PBOC and other authorities have already taken steps that enhance the access of foreign investors to Chinese financial markets. These measures have ratcheted up the pressure to undertake other reforms, such as those on the regulatory and corporate-governance fronts. But history suggests that using capital-account liberalization to force the pace of financial reform is a risky strategy. If other measures do not follow quickly, relaxing capital controls can lead to overborrowing, excessive risk taking, and, in the worst-case scenario, a financial crisis. Chinese leaders need only recall the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, which reflected precisely that chain of events.

A number of factors explain the uneven pace of reform so far. Although some Communist Party leaders want to

move quickly, they face resistance from vested interests, such as state-owned enterprises that benefit from subsidized credit. Prasad and Subacchi emphasize the built-in tension between financial liberalization and China's growth model. The authorities in Beijing have long relied on state-owned banks to direct credit toward more technologically advanced industries and enterprises. That model of economic management would come under strain were the party to reduce its direct role in setting interest rates and step back from its tight control of the banking sector. As Subacchi puts it, policymakers in China will "have to figure out a way to open its financial markets and banking sector while maintaining the unique hybrid, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics,' where economic planning and state control coexist with markets, foreign investments, private property, and individual initiative."

The alternative would be a system of private banks and capital markets capable of more efficiently allocating credit. But such institutions take a long time to develop; Subacchi describes this, appropriately in the Chinese context, as a "long march." China's relatively young stock markets are still subject to violent, unpredictable swings, and officials are understandably reluctant to entrust them with the task of credit allocation. Such volatility also makes foreigners nervous about holding renminbi-denominated securities, since the prices of those securities are apt to change by large amounts when investors in the United States and Europe are asleep.

Subacchi highlights China's distinctive two-pronged approach to overcoming these obstacles to currency internation-

alization. The first prong involves encouraging domestic and foreign companies to use the renminbi in their trade settlements, hoping that the currency's use in financial transactions will follow organically. For Beijing, this approach represents a logical path of least resistance: trade settlements are less risky than purely financial transactions because the merchandise being traded serves as collateral and the loans are paid off as soon as the goods in transit arrive. Once foreign firms receive payments in the renminbi, they make deposits with local banks, which put that money to work in Chinese financial markets. In this way, encouraging the use of the renminbi in trade settlements leads naturally to its use in financial investment.

In fact, there is ample precedent for this approach. The United States followed a similar strategy when the Federal Reserve sought to internationalize the dollar after 1914. But there is no precedent for the second prong of China's strategy: relying on offshore markets to develop a financial clientele for the renminbi. With prodding from Beijing, financial centers from London to Singapore have begun encouraging the direct trading of their countries' currencies against the renminbi. For each foreign financial hub, China has designated one of its so-called Big Four banks to act as an official clearing bank. Meanwhile, the PBOC has negotiated currency-swap arrangements that effectively give foreign central banks a renminbi credit line. In the absence of this credit line, the Bank of England, for example, couldn't easily provide an emergency loan denominated in the renminbi to a customer in London,

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since the bank can't print the Chinese currency. But because the Bank of England has a swap agreement with the PBOC, it can act as a renminbi "lender of last resort." Beijing hopes that over time such arrangements will make foreign regulators less apprehensive about allowing their national banks and firms to do business in the renminbi.

It's still unclear, however, whether this limited strategy will generate a significant amount of international business. Ultimately, if it wants to compete in the global financial game, China will have to permit offshore entities to freely invest in the mainland. Before it can safely do that, however, Beijing will need to upgrade its financial supervision, strengthen corporate governance, and, more generally, make significant further progress on economic and structural reform.

### **SHELTER FROM THE STORM**

Progress on economic and structural reform alone, however, would not allow China to mount a real challenge to the dollar's dominance. The dollar is not just the leading international reserve currency: it is also a safe haven, into which foreign investors rush during episodes of financial turmoil—even when the United States is itself the source of the turmoil, as was the case in the crisis of 2008. "Rock-solid faith that the U.S. federal government will honor its debt obligations has made its Treasury securities the instrument of choice for panicky investors," Prasad writes. Other currencies, such as the Swiss franc, also function as safe havens, on a limited scale. But the renminbi does not. The question is why—and whether this will change.

To be a safe haven, a currency has to be traded in deep and liquid markets; during a crisis, investors value nothing more than liquidity. The U.S. Treasury bill and bond market is the single largest and most liquid financial market in the world. This is an advantage that the market in renminbi-denominated securities does not begin to approach.

Moreover, for a currency to act as a safe haven, investors need to feel confident that there won't be unpredictable changes in the rules of the game. In the country that controls that currency, the central bank and financial regulators must be insulated from politics; they should be legally and financially independent. Contract enforcement must be evenhanded, treating residents and foreign investors alike. Finally, the system of government must feature institutional checks and balances on the arbitrary decision-making power of the executive.

These, clearly, are not characteristics of the current Chinese political system. If anything, President Xi Jinping and the Politburo have further centralized power in their own hands, partly in an effort to reverse the recent gradual slowdown in China's economic growth rate. The party's consolidation of authority and its ongoing commitment to maintaining an annual growth rate of more than six percent fundamentally conflict with the goal of renminbi internationalization.

Still, Prasad and Subacchi are cautiously optimistic. Both their optimism and their caution are appropriate. China already boasts one of the world's largest economies and is the largest exporter in the world; over time, it will develop some of the world's largest financial markets. But financial development

takes time. And because not only financial reform but also political reform is an essential prerequisite for successful renminbi internationalization, considerable skepticism is indeed in order.

Prasad and Subacchi completed their books before two important recent events. First, in the past several months, Chinese authorities have begun to backtrack on some liberalization measures. For example, they have imposed new restrictions on foreign direct investment by Chinese corporations, and they have begun to require Chinese entities to receive official approval before undertaking other cross-border transactions. These restrictions were imposed in response to weakness in China's exchange rate, which put pressure on the PBOC to raise interest rates and drain liquidity from Chinese financial markets in order to support the currency. But taking those steps would have dampened domestic spending and raised the danger that China would miss its official growth-rate target. So instead, the authorities tightened currency controls. This is more evidence that when push comes to shove, Chinese leaders will continue to prioritize domestic objectives over renminbi internationalization.

Both books were also published prior to the election of Trump as U.S. president. If tensions and trade conflicts develop between Beijing and Washington under a Trump presidency, then financial markets in general, and foreign exchange markets in particular, will grow more volatile. Increased volatility in the renminbi exchange rate would make it less attractive for international investors to use the currency. And in a more

uncertain world, the dollar's safe-haven status would further heighten the appeal of the greenback.

Alternatively, investors might look more favorably on the renminbi if the Trump administration makes changes in U.S. policy that undermine faith in the U.S. Treasury's commitment to honor its obligations. During the campaign, Trump suggested that he might seek to "renegotiate" U.S. debts. He has also proposed large, unfunded tax cuts; if those fail to boost productivity and spur economic growth, they could ultimately cast the sustainability of U.S. Treasury obligations into doubt. In that case, the renminbi—and China—would be the obvious beneficiary. 🌐



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# O Brotherhood, Where Art Thou?

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## Debating Sisi's Strategy

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### Egypt's Necessary War on Terror

*Ahmed Abu Zeid*

**B**y asserting that an obsessive vendetta against the Muslim Brotherhood animates all of the Egyptian government's domestic and foreign policies, Steven Cook ("Egypt's Nightmare," November/December 2016) tries to force several square pegs into the same round hole. Such a simplistic approach overlooks key elements of the political and economic situation in Egypt and the region at large, as well as the history and true nature of the Brotherhood.

Cook argues that the Egyptian government's animosity toward the Muslim Brotherhood has wreaked terrible damage, but many of his claims are based on flimsy evidence. For instance, he asserts that Egyptian security forces have "'disappeared' hundreds." But a recent report by Egypt's National Council for Human Rights revealed that of 267 reported disappearances, 238 involved defendants who were either awaiting trial or had already been released. Cook asserts that the government has "arrested more than 40,000 people," citing a figure that continues to circulate even though no one has

provided a list of the names of these individuals. Those echoing this claim have repeated the lie so often that it has been accepted as a fact.

Cook criticizes the government's economic policies and their results, ignoring Egypt's endemic structural problems, the turbulence of the last six years, and the progress the government has made. He neglects to mention that the government has laid out an ambitious economic plan, "Egypt Vision 2030," and made massive investments in infrastructure, adding more than 4,000 miles of roads and 200 tunnels to facilitate commerce and investing roughly \$22 billion to rectify the electricity deficit. In the last two years, unemployment has declined from 13.5 percent to 12.5 percent. As for public health, the government is addressing an outbreak of hepatitis C, having cured 800,000 Egyptians for free since January 2016. What's more, in August, Egypt reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to push through economic reforms in exchange for a \$12 billion loan, and it has since taken steps toward floating the currency and paring back subsidies.

Throughout his article, Cook portrays Egypt as the primary destabilizing factor in the Middle East. He insists that the Egyptian government's "obsession" with the Muslim Brotherhood—a group that Cook claims offers "a vision of authenticity, nationalism, and religious reform"—has become the guiding principle of Egypt's foreign policy.

But Cook overlooks the fact that Egypt is combating not a group but a scourge. The Muslim Brotherhood is a terrorist organization that espouses an extremist ideology. The founder of the Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, condoned

and practiced violence; its most important ideologue, Sayyid Qutb, introduced the extremist doctrine of *takfirism*, which brands all those who do not conform to Islamist doctrine as apostates and legitimate targets for acts of violence. In his recent book, *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days*, Eric Trager points out that Qutb inspired contemporary terrorists such as the al Qaeda preacher Anwar al-Awlaki and the current leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Egypt's fight is therefore not against the Brotherhood in particular but against extremism and terrorism in general.

Cook ignores this threat. He would have Egypt show more leniency toward extremists, arms smugglers, and lawless militias. He would have Egypt give the Brotherhood a second chance, despite the explicit rejection by the Egyptian people of the Brothers' tyrannical rule. Meanwhile, when it comes to foreign policy, Cook castigates Egypt for attempting to "suffocate" the people of Gaza by imposing a unilateral blockade and destroying underground tunnels that connect Egypt to Gaza, and he blames Egypt for exacerbating the humanitarian tragedies in Libya and Syria.

But the destruction of the underground tunnels was a national security necessity. Egypt faces a ruthless terrorist campaign in northern Sinai. The tunnels are illegal and concealed, and terrorists use them to smuggle weapons, as Cook concedes. Cook brushes aside decades of Egyptian efforts advocating Palestinian rights to criticize one necessary national security measure.

Far from accelerating Libya's fragmentation, Egypt has prioritized that country's stability and territorial integrity.

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Egypt's stance toward Libya builds on the Skhirat agreement that Libya's factions signed in December 2015, which lays out a framework for forming a government of national unity. Egypt recognizes the importance of forming such a government, but along with the rest of the international community, it also acknowledges the importance of parliamentary approval by the legitimate legislature. And Egypt supports the Libyan National Army in its war against lawless militias.

Cook similarly mischaracterizes Egyptian policy toward Syria. Portraying the Egyptian government as a supporter of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, he insists that Egypt's sole aim is preventing the Brotherhood from gaining a foothold in Syria. He concedes, however, that Egypt has "not sent Assad any money, weapons, or soldiers," while neglecting to mention the fact that Cairo has hosted meetings of moderate Syrian opposition groups. So how exactly has Egypt supported Assad? Egypt's stance on Syria has been clear from the beginning of the conflict: it has called for a political solution that involves all parties, alleviates humanitarian suffering, combats terrorism, and preserves Syria's territorial integrity. These elements also constitute the essence of the Geneva conferences, the framework for the international community's peace process.

In blaming Egypt for the Middle East's problems, Cook's article raises a pertinent question: How did the current debacle in the region arise? The plight of the people of Gaza is a culmination of decades of double standards and inaction by the international community. The chaos engulfing Libya emerged after an international military campaign that

achieved little more than the demolition of the country's state structures and that left Libya at the mercy of terrorists and mercenaries. As for the conflict in Syria, it has spiraled into a cycle of self-perpetuating violence, in large part due to shortsighted actions that have failed to advance dialogue. And the policy of appeasing and integrating extremists, supported by Cook and many others in the West, has accelerated the rise of terrorism and chaos in the region.

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**AHMED ABU ZEID** is the Spokesperson for Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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## Cook Replies

I would like to thank Ahmed Abu Zeid for his response. His comments only underscore the point I made throughout my article that the Egyptian government, in its single-minded pursuit of the Muslim Brotherhood, has wasted precious resources and distorted its domestic politics, with profoundly negative consequences for Egypt's neighbors.

I would also like to note one factual error in Abu Zeid's response. Nowhere in my article do I claim that Egypt is "the primary destabilizing factor in the Middle East." 🌐

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## Recent Books

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### Political and Legal

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G. John Ikenberry

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*Forged Through Fire: War, Peace, and the Democratic Bargain*

BY JOHN FERREJOHN AND FRANCES MCCALL ROSENBLUTH. Liveright, 2016, 480 pp.

**A**cross the centuries, wars have had complex and contradictory effects on democracy, at some moments triggering great expansions of citizens' rights and suffrage, and at others tipping power away from the people and toward the state. This illuminating book's core insight is that modern democracy emerged less as a fulfillment of timeless values than as a "bargain" between rulers and the ruled, struck in the shadow of war. Ferejohn and Rosenbluth argue that modern democracy took root because the appeal of nationalism proved sufficiently potent to rally public support for war but not strong enough to let governments ignore the growing demands of the working classes that had formed during the Industrial Revolution. The book begins with fascinating chapters about war and democracy in classical Athens and Rome; later chapters explore the nineteenth century's grand armies and the emergence of "total war" in the twentieth century, which had profound effects on the expansion of democratic life in the West. The very different pathways

traveled by the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and imperial Japan reveal the highly contingent and fragile nature of the democratic impulse.

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*Reflections on Progress: Essays on the Global Political Economy*

BY KEMAL DERVIS. Brookings Institution Press, 2016, 208 pp.

In these collected essays, Dervis combines the expertise of an economist with the sensibilities of an enlightened social democrat to ruminate on the troubles of contemporary capitalism. He highlights growing anxiety about poverty, unemployment, inequality, and the extreme concentration of wealth and laments that Western governments seem incapable of developing more socially and economically inclusive growth models. At each turn, Dervis looks for possibilities for reform through tax policy, regulation, and social spending. If the technology-driven growth that has propelled the global economy forward for the last century is now ending, as Robert Gordon and other economists argue, then the prospects for progress are grim. Dervis is less pessimistic, however, and he pins his hopes on a renaissance in democratic institutions and revitalized social contracts. For Dervis, progress has not ended. Rather, understandings of progress must change to allow for forms of economic development that are more sustainable and equitable. He makes a convincing case for reform, but he does not answer a significant question: Where are the reformers?



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*The Return of History*

BY JENNIFER WELSH. House of Anansi Press, 2016, 360 pp.

Just two decades ago, Western ideals seemed to be sweeping the world, as a succession of countries transitioned to democracy, liberal internationalism flourished, and thinkers hailed “the end of history.” But as Welsh vividly chronicles, history has come back with a vengeance. Her book catalogs many of the things that have “returned” from the past: barbarism, mass refugee flows, confrontation between Russia and the West, growing economic inequality. But by spending most of her time contrasting today’s realities with the optimistic visions that took hold in the immediate post–Cold War moment, Welsh has rigged the game. Liberal democracy’s ascendance has unfolded over two centuries, not two decades. And from the beginning, it has been a tale full of contingencies, setbacks, crises, and lucky breaks. Still, Welsh reminds readers that liberal democratic advances can be reversed and that large (and perhaps growing) constituencies inside and outside the West now favor autocratic nationalism and illiberalism. For liberal democracy to regain its luster, its advocates must craft new narratives about its struggles, failures, accomplishments, and enduring principles.

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*Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers Are Remaking Global Order*  
BY OLIVER STUENKEL. Polity, 2016, 180 pp.

Stuenkel argues that conventional understandings of international order and global change are distorted by

deep-seated, Western-centric biases, revealed in narratives that cast Westerners as the sole agents of modernity and the only carriers of progressive ideas. Stuenkel pokes holes in those accounts, showing that concepts such as religious freedom, human rights, and sovereignty have never been exclusively Western inventions; they were hammered out over centuries with contributions from African, Asian, and Middle Eastern societies. He argues that scholars should challenge Western-centric interpretations because they make the United States and European countries more suspicious of rising non-Western states and reluctant to share power with them, which Stuenkel thinks is unwise. If modernity is seen not as a Western gift to the world but as a global project with many sources of inspiration, the struggle between the West and “the rest” will be seen for what it really is: not a contest between deep values and philosophies of order but rather an organic evolution of world politics in which power, authority, status, and privilege are redistributed to make the existing order more fair and functional.

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*The Despot’s Accomplice: How the West Is Aiding and Abetting the Decline of Democracy*

BY BRIAN KLAAS. Oxford University Press, 2017, 256 pp.

In recent years, democracy seems to have fallen on hard times, while authoritarianism has flourished. In this spirited and contrarian book, Klaas makes the case for pushing back against this global authoritarian tide. He does not defend the West’s many botched efforts at democracy promotion or the misuse of military

intervention; instead he argues that the core of Western strategy should be confronting despots rather than seeking pragmatic accommodations with them. Such compromises have led to what he calls “the Saudi Arabia effect,” as the United States and other liberal states cozy up to nondemocratic regimes in the name of geostrategic expediency, only to find themselves one step removed from the role of an active accomplice in oppression. He also warns against “the Madagascar effect,” which finds Western governments setting extremely low standards for “counterfeit democracies” so that they can justify working with them, which is what happened in the wake of the rigged elections held after a 2013 coup in Madagascar. He concedes that the short-term costs of confronting despots are real but maintains that doing so yields long-term strategic and moral gains.

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## Economic, Social, and Environmental

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*Richard N. Cooper*

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*Endangered Economies: How the Neglect of Nature Threatens Our Prosperity*  
BY GEOFFREY HEAL. Columbia University Press, 2016, 240 pp.

**E**nvironmentalists concerned about climate change have sometimes found themselves pitted against those in poor countries whose first priority is economic development. Heal persuasively argues that these agendas are not in conflict at all, and he crafts

an excellent overview of the economic case for protecting the environment. First, significant climate change will make economic development more difficult on several fronts. Second, technical advances have made alternative sources of energy increasingly competitive—and more progress is on the way, particularly when it comes to the storage of electricity. Finally, if governments began to properly price environmental assets—for example, charging firms for permission to emit greenhouse gases—they could raise a great deal of revenue that, properly employed, would enhance development. All around the world, societies need to seriously alter their economic behaviors to prevent the worst-case climate scenarios. But such changes need not come at the expense of growth.

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*The Innovation Illusion: How So Little Is Created by So Many Working So Hard*  
BY FREDRIK ERIXON AND BJORN WEIGEL. Yale University Press, 2016, 312 pp.

It has become common to hear warnings that in the near future, automation will destroy jobs and technological advances will accelerate economic and social turbulence. The authors of this sobering book argue the contrary: innovation—by which they mean the commercialization of new discoveries, not the discoveries themselves—is slowing down, mainly because Western societies have become sclerotic. Corporations have grown more risk averse, owing to three factors: their increased reliance on financial markets (as opposed to internal funding), a shift in the corporate world from entrepreneurship

to rent seeking, and the growth in complex and continually changing government regulations. Erixon and Weigel take aim in particular at the so-called precautionary principle, which holds that companies must prove that their products or practices are not harmful before they can bring them to the market. This approach is common in Europe, where, the authors contend, it severely penalizes risk taking and flies in the face of the EU's official goal of encouraging innovation.

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*Rules for a Flat World: Why Humans Invented Law and How to Reinvent It for a Complex Global Economy*

BY GILLIAN K. HADFIELD. Oxford University Press, 2016, 408 pp.

Anyone who has actually read the terms and conditions that Apple and many other firms require users to accept with a click of the mouse before using software or hardware knows how long, complex, and incomprehensible modern contracts have become—and how much privacy they demand that users give up. Contracts are not the only kinds of legal documents that have ballooned in this way: the median length of a U.S. Supreme Court decision has increased fourfold during the past 60 years. In this thought-provoking book, Hadfield argues that modern law has become too complicated, too costly, and too inflexible for a rapidly changing world. She attributes this rigidity to the fact that law is effectively monopolized by lawyers and argues that nonlawyers should be able to compete to provide certain legal services. Australia and the United Kingdom have already begun to move in that direction, in the belief that opening up the law will foster badly needed innovation.

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*The Nobel Factor: The Prize in Economics, Social Democracy, and the Market Turn*

BY AVNER OFFER AND GABRIEL SODERBERG. Princeton University Press, 2016, 344 pp.

This well-informed, trenchant critique of academic economics features profiles of the economists who have won the Nobel Prize in the field. The prize in economics was introduced with the support of Sveriges Riksbank, Sweden's central bank, in 1969—seven decades later than the five prizes originally endowed by Alfred Nobel. According to Offer and Soderberg, the bank hoped to influence debate within Sweden over the future direction of the country's social democracy by conferring on economics the status of a science. (The prize is officially called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences.) The authors question this position on the grounds that modern economic theory is either untestable or, typically, persists despite frequent empirical refutations of its assumptions or predictions. Given this track record, they urge economists to be more humble when offering policy advice based on their ideas.

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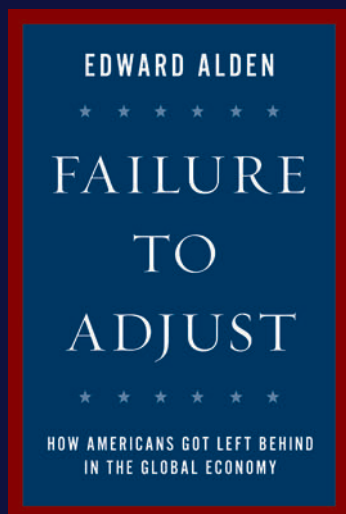
*Faithonomics: Religion and the Free Market*

BY TORHEL BREKKE. Oxford University Press, 2016, 256 pp.

Religion and economics are usually regarded as separate domains, except for religious injunctions that prescribe or proscribe certain forms of economic behavior. In this unusual book, Brekke applies economic concepts—supply and demand, public versus private goods,

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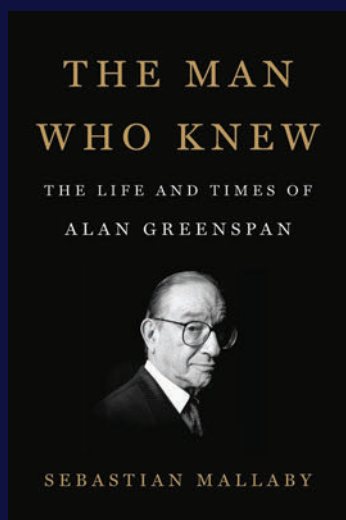


In *Failure to Adjust: How Americans Got Left Behind in the Global Economy*, CFR Bernard L. Schwartz Senior Fellow Edward Alden explores how political support for trade has collapsed and how to correct the course. It is a compelling history of the last four decades of U.S. economic and trade policies that have left too many Americans unable to adapt to or compete in the current global marketplace.

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Alan Greenspan was once hailed as the omnipotent “maestro” of the U.S. economy, but his reputation suffered in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. In *The Man Who Knew: The Life and Times of Alan Greenspan*, CFR Paul A. Volcker Senior Fellow for International Economics Sebastian Mallaby—through unmatched access to Greenspan—presents a nuanced assessment of one of the most influential economic statesmen of the twentieth century and issues a warning about the future of finance.

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oligopoly versus free markets, and so on—to the provision of the religious services offered by several faiths. His main conclusion is that state support for particular religions—even indirect support, such as tax exemptions—is neither wise nor warranted. Far from promoting religious practice, it generally leads to a loss of public interest and also fosters rent seeking and even arbitrage by religious authorities.

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## Military, Scientific, and Technological

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*Lawrence D. Freedman*

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*Last Hope Island: Britain, Occupied Europe, and the Brotherhood That Helped Turn the Tide of War*

BY LYNNE OLSON. Random House, 2017, 576 pp.

Olson celebrates the heroism of people from occupied Europe who helped the Allies win World War II, challenging the view that their efforts counted for little in the great scheme of things. She opens with the difficult decision that faced European royal families: Should they flee the approaching Nazis, decamping for London and leaving their people behind? Olson generally depicts the British establishment as classist, xenophobic, and inept. This was evident in the reluctance of the Royal Air Force to put Czech and Polish squadrons into the Battle of Britain—until there was no choice. Once in the fight, those squadrons performed magnificently. But she

also reveals the imagination that went into making the BBC World Service a force for truth to combat Nazi propaganda. Olson's account is sometimes superficial but never dull. Many moving stories and characters enliven the book, which succeeds in bringing to life the achievements of European patriots who fought on even when their cause appeared close to hopeless.

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*The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War*  
BY H. W. BRANDS. Doubleday, 2016, 448 pp.

U.S. President Harry Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur in April 1951 is a classic moment in civil-military relations. MacArthur, as supreme commander of UN forces in Korea, had added to his already awesome reputation with the boldest move of the campaign: the amphibious landing at Inchon. But he had also squandered the advantage he'd earned with that maneuver by pushing his luck. Driving forward to the Yalu River, he provoked China into intervening, a possibility that he had previously dismissed. As his forces were pushed back, he raised the stakes, urging that the United States and its allies should take the war to the Chinese. Truman's patience had already been sorely tried by MacArthur's condescension: when the president made a long journey to meet the general at Wake Island in the Pacific Ocean, MacArthur did not even bother to stay for lunch. With the stakes so high and the British fretting about a wider (and possibly nuclear) war, Truman decided he'd had enough of this "rank insubordination."

MacArthur still enjoyed great support from the American public, but not from his fellow generals. Brands' book is not a revisionist account, and it skimps a bit on the wider context of the spat. But Brands is an accomplished storyteller and skillfully captures Truman's seething irritation and MacArthur's self-regard and almost comical grandiloquence.

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*The Imagineers of War: The Untold Story of DARPA, the Pentagon Agency That Changed the World*

BY SHARON WEINBERGER. Knopf, 2017, 496 pp.

The title of Weinberger's book might lead one to expect revelations about hidden geniuses responsible for great military innovations. But the impression left by this history of the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, set up in 1958 largely to get a grip on the U.S. military's space programs, is that many of its projects were delusional, wasteful, and at times downright dangerous. DARPA did play a role in some important developments, notably early research that led to the Internet, drones, and stealth bombers. But from the Vietnam War until the present, its leaders have tended to look for technical fixes to essentially political problems; the results have sometimes been disastrous, such as the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. In a telling line, Weinberger notes that in recent years, DARPA's "press releases tout devices that can help soldiers scale glass skyscrapers, while American forces fight in a country dominated by mud houses." Her account is critical but not mocking; it is a well-researched contribution to the history of U.S. military technology.

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*Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War*

BY CONRAD C. CRANE. Naval Institute Press, 2016, 320 pp.

Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, many experts issued warnings about how dire the aftermath might be without proper preparations. Crane was one such Cassandra; he was ignored by the Bush administration along with all the others. But in 2006, the Pentagon turned to Crane to help draft a new counterinsurgency manual for the U.S. Army and the Marines. The resulting text influenced the conduct of the so-called surge in Iraq that began the following year. Crane's memoir includes a few too many reports of conferences and lists of their attendees, and the book's discussion of military doctrine sometimes becomes abstruse. Yet Crane's reflections deserve attention, for they illuminate the key questions of counterinsurgency with great lucidity. His book offers a rare account of how military bureaucracies debate strategy, along with plenty of good-sense suggestions that should guide future campaigns. It would be a shame if Crane became a Cassandra once more.

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*Unclear Physics: Why Iraq and Libya Failed to Build Nuclear Weapons*

BY MALFRID BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER. Cornell University Press, 2016, 288 pp.

Why do some states succeed at building nuclear weapons and others fail? Braut-Hegghammer has produced an insightful account of two cases of failure. Iraq might have achieved its

nuclear ambitions had Saddam Hussein not started a fight with the West by invading Kuwait in 1990; he was forced to dismantle his nuclear facilities after the ensuing Gulf War. Libya, meanwhile, never made much headway, despite three decades of effort and considerable help from the illicit proliferation network run by the Pakistani physicist A. Q. Khan. The Libyans eventually abandoned their program as part of a broader rapprochement with the West. In both cases, the programs were chaotic and hampered by inadequate oversight and shifting priorities. Iraq's program produced better results because the Iraqi government retained some capacity, whereas the Libyan dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi had deliberately dismantled his country's state institutions. Braut-Hegghammer suggests that regardless of the importance that these autocrats attached to their nuclear programs, neither leader truly prioritized them—or even had much of a clue about how they were proceeding. The lesson for nonproliferation is that intentions often outstrip capabilities: whether a state can actually manage a complex nuclear program matters more than how much its leaders want one.

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## The United States

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*Walter Russell Mead*

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*Great Again: How to Fix Our Crippled America*

BY DONALD J. TRUMP. Threshold Editions, 2016, 208 pp.

*The Field of Fight*

BY MICHAEL T. FLYNN AND MICHAEL LEDEEN. St. Martin's Press, 2016, 208 pp.

It's hard to know how President Donald Trump and his national security adviser, Michael Flynn, will respond to the kinds of unanticipated international events that have often upset even the best-laid plans of new administrations. But their books provide useful insights into the instincts and approaches that will guide them.

A very distinct worldview emerges from Trump's book, which was originally published in 2015 (with the far less sunny title *Crippled America*) and then substantially revised and reissued during the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump is a popular nationalist rather than an ideological one. He sees the United States as a community of people with shared customs, a shared history, and shared values rather than as a nation founded on a unique and particular set of ideas. In Trump's view, the country must compete more vigorously in an international system in which all states naturally seek their own economic and security interests. Trump does not instinctively embrace the idea of a global liberal

order based on economic interdependence and free trade. He evinces even less interest in the concept of a global cosmopolitan order buttressed by a universal commitment to human rights and democratic ideals.

Flynn shares Trump's vision of an inherently chaotic and dangerous world. The first and most immediate threat comes from violent jihadism. Trump and Flynn both downplay the distinctions between Shiite and Sunni radicalism: Iran may be fighting the Islamic State (or ISIS), but in Trump's and Flynn's eyes, the two powers are more similar than different. Iran resembles what ISIS might become if it achieved true sovereignty, won diplomatic recognition, and settled down to build a collection of allies and sympathizers around the Middle East and the world.

China occupies second place in both men's rankings of the top threats to U.S. interests and security. Russia places a distant third, and the hope of enlisting Moscow's help against both radical jihadism and China might explain why Trump has positioned himself for yet another U.S.-Russian "reset." Still, for Trump and Flynn, Russia's alliance with Iran poses a major obstacle. (They appear far less concerned by Russia's annexation of Crimea and Moscow's attempts to undermine the NATO-backed European order.) The question of whether Russia can be pulled away from Iran is likely to occupy many minds in the early months of the new administration.

Trump's elevation to the White House represents a profound break with the intellectual atmosphere and policy assumptions that have shaped two generations of American statecraft.

Supporters of sustaining the liberal order have long argued that doing so, although difficult and expensive, represents the most practical and cost-effective method of furthering U.S. interests. Whether that logic will force itself on Trump and his team remains to be seen.

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*The Complacent Class: The Self-Defeating Quest for the American Dream*

BY TYLER COWEN. St. Martin's Press, 2017, 256 pp.

Cowen's timely and well-written book points to a central feature of contemporary American life: since the 1980s, U.S. society has become less dynamic and more risk averse. The quest for safety and predictability has made the country both more and less comfortable than before. Although many (perhaps even most) Americans enjoy the stability and security that the status quo provides, increasing numbers feel thwarted by the lack of opportunity and slow economic growth that characterize their increasingly static society. Others rejoice that their neighborhoods have not been disrupted by new highways and housing developments, but such "not in my backyard" stances create barriers to economic activity that reduce growth, depress wages, and eliminate jobs. The apparent stability of American society, Cowen believes, is an illusion: behind the placid façade, technological change and global competition have combined with domestic discontent to bring forth a new age of disruption—and, hopefully, renewal. For Cowen, a number of disparate events—from nationwide protests



over police brutality to the election of Donald Trump as president—serve as signs that disruptive forces are gathering strength. Only time will tell whether they will yield benign or malignant effects.

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*Learning From Experience*

BY GEORGE P. SHULTZ. Hoover Institution Press, 2016, 184 pp.

At a time of rapid change and upheaval in the United States, this short and engaging memoir by one of the most accomplished Americans of the last half century stands as a testament to the insights that a long life can provide. Shultz, now 96, served as President Richard Nixon's secretary of labor, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and treasury secretary, and later served as secretary of state in the Reagan administration. In his book, he distills the basic lessons he learned during his decades in public service and in his private life and applies them to some of today's challenges. Simple as his insights sound—always be learning, never compromise your basic principles just to keep a job, and so on—they are often profound and provocative. Surveying the troubled condition of the United States today, Shultz strikes a reassuringly hopeful note. "I remain a genuine optimist," he writes in the final chapter, "even though we are surrounded by difficult problems and are not at the top of our game." As the United States steps uncertainly into the Trump era, Shultz's wisdom and counsel are more valuable, and more badly needed, than ever.

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## Western Europe

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*Andrew Moravcsik*

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*Hitler: Ascent, 1889–1939*

BY VOLKER ULLRICH. Knopf, 2016, 1,008 pp.

**I**s today's right-wing populism comparable to the fascism of the 1930s? Many observers take comfort in the belief that times have changed so much that such an analogy is anachronistic. They point out that Adolf Hitler rose to power owing to the shock of the Great Depression, the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles, the menace of communist revolution, the legacy of anti-Semitism, and the fragility of Germany's democratic norms—a perfect storm unlike anything before or since. In this biography, which covers the Nazi leader's life up to the outbreak of war in 1939, Ullrich calls such complacency into question. Hitler is no anachronism; he is an eerily familiar figure: inexperienced, impulsive, ignorant, egomaniacal, petty, and resentful of established experts—yet gifted with an extraordinary theatrical talent for emotionally compelling, demagogic appeals to nativism. His opponents underestimated his political skill, viewing him as an incompetent bumbler and a temporary celebrity who could be easily tamed by the conservative establishment. As Hitler rose, his rivals waged internecine political squabbles—until it was too late to stop him. The material that Ullrich presents is hardly original, but his book nonetheless serves as an eloquent reminder of the

adage that those who do not read history are doomed to repeat it.

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*Laid Low: Inside the Crisis That Overwhelmed Europe and the IMF*  
BY PAUL BLUSTEIN. Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2016, 504 pp.

Countless articles and books have analyzed the euro crisis, but until now, a serious treatment of the International Monetary Fund's role in the crisis has been missing. Media reports often portray the IMF as filled with neoliberal ideologues who enthusiastically helped EU institutions and leaders impose harsh austerity policies and debt-repayment terms on southern European countries. In this authoritative and detailed account, Blustein marshals impressive research to rebut this view. He argues that the fund is home to sound technocrats who act independently and that, in addressing the euro crisis, IMF economists have proved more farsighted and able to learn from mistakes than national governments and have consistently advocated more balanced, less austere policies for Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, and Portugal, including debt rescheduling and the imposition of higher losses on foreign bondholders. Unfortunately, those proposals have been consistently overruled by European governments (which are overrepresented on the IMF's board), sometimes rejected by the U.S. Treasury Department, and even shot down on occasion by southern European politicians who have sought to avoid short-term adjustment costs.

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*Holocaust Angst: The Federal Republic of Germany and American Holocaust Memory Since the 1970s*

BY JACOB S. EDER. Oxford University Press, 2016, 320 pp.

It is easy to forget that for decades after World War II, the Holocaust did not play anything like the role it does today in American culture. Beginning in the 1970s, mostly American Jewish activists sought to create more opportunities for Holocaust survivors to tell their stories and thus to bolster awareness of this singular event. Their campaign culminated in the construction of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on the Washington Mall, which officially opened in 1993. At the time, German leaders worried that the museum would cast present-day Germany in a bad light and threaten the transatlantic alliance—the angst of Eder's title. The German government tried to convince the Holocaust Museum's founders to acknowledge postwar Germany's remarkably successful policies of democratization, reconciliation, and remembrance, as well as wartime German opposition to Hitler. Those efforts were completely rebuffed, but German fears proved to be exaggerated: the new museum conveyed a relatively balanced view, and Germany itself soon changed its policy, as symbolized by the construction of a striking Holocaust memorial near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. All of this reflects a broader process through which the Holocaust has been “universalized”: transformed from a specific event in Germany's past into a stand-in for genocide anywhere.

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*Charlemagne*

BY JOHANNES FRIED.

TRANSLATED BY PETER LEWIS.

Harvard University Press, 2016, 688 pp.

Fried, one of Germany's most distinguished historians, launches this grand biography with a disarming caveat: "The following book is not a novel, but it is a work of fiction all the same." Fried believes that we are impossibly distant from those who inhabited Europe 1,200 years ago: we can hardly imagine their language, emotions, and beliefs—or even the "alien landscape" of impenetrable forests and deserted wastelands they inhabited. At this distance, historical biography can be no better than a rough approximation, even when the subject is the greatest European monarch of the era. Charlemagne united Europe for the first time since the fall of Rome, and the resulting Holy Roman Empire endured for a thousand years. His reforms of military logistics, money, law, and many other things changed Europe forever. Yet we know little about him with certainty. Much of what contemporary sources and subsequent historians reveal is probably romantic legend. The record is contradictory and thus open to interpretation, as befits a merciless conqueror who was canonized shortly after his death. For those who wish to grapple with Charlemagne's life in its entirety, without false certainties, Fried's book is the best choice.

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*French Foreign Policy Since 1945: An Introduction*

BY FRÉDÉRIC BOZO. TRANSLATED

BY JONATHAN HENSHER. Berghahn Books, 2016, 220 pp.

Bozo commands the details of his country's

foreign policy, and he never gets lost in them. French foreign policy, in his view, changes far less than the grand rhetorical declarations of successive presidents might lead one to expect. Beginning with President Charles de Gaulle in 1945, all French leaders have sought to manage the slow decline of France's relative prestige and power in both Europe and the world. Accordingly, maintaining substantial military (especially nuclear) capabilities and a central role in the EU have remained constant priorities. Although Bozo dispels the illusion of powerful French presidents, his treatment relies heavily on a set of perceptions common among French foreign policy elites and so focuses on NATO security and nuclear policy to the exclusion of nearly everything else. A reader might thus never suspect that France pursues an active policy of military or economic intervention in Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, in an era of "soft" and economic power, French policies on trade, finance, immigration, development, culture, European enlargement, and East Asia go nearly unmentioned. The definitive study of modern French foreign policy remains to be written.

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*The Face of Britain: The History of the Nation Through Its Portraits*

BY SIMON SCHAMA. Oxford

University Press, 2016, 632 pp.

Contemporary art history increasingly spawns multimedia spectacles. Schama's work on British portraiture is an example: it has appeared as a BBC series, a National Portrait Gallery exhibition, and now this book. Schama helped pioneer this multiplatform approach

and remains one of the best in the business. He devotes successive chapters of this richly illustrated volume to the themes that he argues have lain at the heart of British national identity: power, love, fame, self, and “the people.” Schama does not stick to any overarching thesis for long, and he says little about deep causes, the sociological context, or even aesthetics. Rather, he recounts the personal foibles of the highlighted artists and their subjects in the manner of refined dinner-table gossip. The result is unfailingly amusing and intermittently risqué, delivered with smooth, slightly ironic panache.

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## Western Hemisphere

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*Richard Feinberg*

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*Latin America and the Caribbean 2030: Future Scenarios*

BY JASON MARCZAK AND PETER ENGELKE. Inter-American Development Bank and the Atlantic Council, 2016, 152 pp.

**T**his exercise in strategic foresight considers the factors that will have the most influence on the future of development in Latin America: the quality of education; the level of investment in infrastructure; and the evolution of democratic governance, especially in the areas of transparency and accountability, fiscal reform, regulatory efficiency, and social inclusion. Much also hinges on the evolving political attitudes of the growing middle classes: Will they be satisfied with gradual reform,

or will they give in to the populist temptation? Among the more interesting findings is the fact that the region’s current demographic dividend—the high ratio of working people to dependents—will cease to pay off by the 2040s, when aging populations will require sharp gains in labor productivity in order to sustain prosperity. In one best-case scenario, the region would up its game in scientific innovation and export diversification. Another potential bright spot: climate change could transform South America into the breadbasket of the world. The region will also likely be blessed with a relative absence of ethnic and sectarian fissures, international terrorism, and interstate conflict, even though narcotics trafficking will persist.

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*The Political Economy of China–Latin America Relations in the New Millennium: Brave New World*

EDITED BY MARGARET MYERS AND CAROL WISE. Routledge, 2017, 300 pp.

Leading experts on Chinese–Latin American relations puncture lazy myths and widespread hyperbole in this valuable collection of well-edited essays. Chinese investments and foreign assistance in the region, although noteworthy, are not nearly as significant as many assume, and many Chinese projects announced with great fanfare remain in limbo, including a \$50-billion-plus Nicaraguan canal. Overall, the contributors are sanguine about Chinese motives, finding that China’s commercial goals take precedence over its possible geopolitical aims—at least for now. A number of the authors note that generous Chinese



lending, notably to Venezuela, might have enabled irresponsible populist spending. And some Chinese firms have violated regional norms by damaging natural environments, harming indigenous communities, and possibly engaging in corrupt practices. But Chinese businesses are learning, and their practices seem to be improving. Looking forward, if the United States confronts Latin America with less attractive policies on trade, investment, and labor movement, China may be tempted to fill the resulting vacuum. The transformation of China's benign commercial interests into geopolitical ambitions may arrive sooner than the contributors to this volume—assembled prior to the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president—could possibly have anticipated.

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*Cuba: Portfolio of Opportunities for Foreign Investment, 2016–17*

BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND INVESTMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA. Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment of the Republic of Cuba, 2016, 116 pp.

For the third time in as many years, Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment has published an impressive compilation of development projects open to foreign participation. The latest report details 395 business opportunities, up from the 326 in 2015 and 246 in 2014. The most pressing investment priorities remain unchanged: tourism, to earn badly needed foreign exchange (114 projects listed in the latest edition); energy, to replace declining subsidies from Venezuela (87 hydrocarbon projects and 23 that focus on renewables); and

agriculture, to address food insecurity and promote export diversification (76 general agricultural projects and 13 more in the sugar industry). This long list of projects makes clear that many Cuban officials are well aware of their country's pressing needs and realize that foreign firms could make vital contributions to the island's future prosperity. Nevertheless, the government's approval of foreign investment projects outside the tourism sector remains frustratingly slow, the result of bureaucratic sclerosis and lingering ideological opposition in some quarters of the leadership.

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*Sólo así: Por una agenda ciudadana independiente* (The Only Way: Toward an Independent Citizen Agenda)

BY JORGE G. CASTAÑEDA. Debate, 2016, 88 pp.

Castañeda adopts the voice of a responsible policy entrepreneur in this tract meant to position him to run for president in Mexico's 2018 election. A leading intellectual and former Mexican foreign minister who has journeyed from the socialist left toward the reformist center, Castañeda recognizes the progress, inadequate though it may be, that Mexico has made in reforming its democratic institutions and protecting its citizens' social and economic rights. He strikes a cooperative note in discussing relations with the United States and urges Mexico to avoid anachronistic, destructive populism. He seeks to improve his country's democracy by combating corruption and official impunity, protecting human rights, reforming the electoral system to facilitate the rise of independent candidates, defending minorities, and enhancing

consumer protections. Castañeda argues that the dominant political parties are too thoroughly compromised to realize such goals: only an independent movement that rallies civil society can modernize Mexico. He sees hope in an educated, youthful middle class that perceives human rights as a legitimately Mexican concept rather than as a foreign import. In his denunciation of the political class, Castañeda may sound like antiestablishment populists elsewhere. But his campaign platform is more thoughtful, constructive, and, ultimately, affirmative.

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## Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

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*Robert Legvold*

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### *Should We Fear Russia?*

BY DMITRI TRENIN. Polity, 2016, 144 pp.

**R**are is the foreign policy analyst who can apply cool, dispassionate, balanced, and critical analysis to the policies of his or her own country while also understanding and explaining the impulses that drive other countries, particularly adversaries. Trenin, a Russian scholar, is one such analyst. In this short, tightly argued book, his answer to the question in the book's title is yes, but not for the oversimplified reasons most in the West would give. He first lays out the many factors that have wrongly increased Western wariness of Vladimir Putin's Russia and treats them to an astringent wash. Then he turns to the very real challenges that Russia does

present to the United States in eastern Europe, the Middle East, and greater Eurasia—and to the different challenges it poses to western European countries, for whom Russia represents less a looming hegemonic rival than an alienated neighbor that is turning eastward. Trenin concludes with some smart suggestions for how the West can address what should be its real concerns about Russia. Most of the steps he recommends, however, would depend on a grand geopolitical *modus vivendi* that would require a level of wisdom not yet evident in either Moscow or Western capitals.

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### *The War Within: Diaries From the Siege of Leningrad*

BY ALEXIS PERI. Harvard University Press, 2017, 384 pp.

The battle for Leningrad lasted 1,127 days; the city was under siege for 900 of them. Between 1.6 million and two million Soviet citizens died, 800,000 of them civilians—40 percent of the city's prewar population. (As Peri points out, the overall death toll approximates the total number of members of the U.S. military who died in war between 1776 and 1975.) Leningrad residents of all types—from factory foremen to teachers, party workers to professional writers—kept diaries during the ordeal. Peri searches through 125 of them to capture how the nightmare deconstructed the writers' prior realities and altered their sense of humanity. Her portrait is a sensitive, at times almost poetic examination of their emotions and disordered mental states. It both contrasts with and complements the equally accurate official Soviet portrait of a stalwart population

standing firm in the face of evil and in defense of Soviet ideals. Peri makes plain that even though the diarists endured the total transformation of their fundamental sense of reality, their social relationships, and the nature of their social order, most of them did not become alienated from the values and basic outlook of the Soviet system.

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*Russia: What Everyone Needs to Know*  
BY TIMOTHY J. COLTON. Oxford University Press, 2016, 288 pp.

At first glance, one might think this volume were merely a primer that takes the uninitiated through the key stages of Russia's history. But that would be to sell short a shrewd, bountiful book. With a finely tuned sense of choice, Colton selects the historical and physical features that have made Russia Russia and then sets about exploring a wide range of issues: how the country grew so large, the imprint of empire on its character, the reasons it chose revolution over reform, the triumph of the Bolsheviks, and the ways in which Soviet leaders Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Leonid Brezhnev defined their respective eras. His discussion becomes even more refined and comprehensive when he turns to contemporary Russia, touching on almost every significant aspect of the country's foreign and domestic development during the Yeltsin and Putin periods. Colton avoids simple formulas and undergirds his analysis with carefully chosen data, delivered in a cool, evenhanded fashion. This is particularly true of his assessment of the Putin regime and its prospects. Russia

has never, and will never, follow foreign models, Colton argues: "What Russia can and must become is a better edition of itself."

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*Bosnia's Paralyzed Peace*

BY CHRISTOPHER BENNETT.

Oxford University Press, 2016, 416 pp.

Readers who think the Bosnian tragedy ended long ago and that the 1995 Dayton accords set the country on a path to peace and stability are in for a surprise. After retracing the Bosnian war, the hopes surrounding the agreement that ended it, and the two decades of increasingly fraught efforts to implement the accords, Bennett warns that, despite generous contributions from international organizations, Bosnia is not evolving "into a self-sustaining and stable democracy." Instead, the country is "deteriorating at an accelerating pace." Meanwhile, "a fatalistic cynicism appears to have taken root," even as the international community stubbornly hopes that the lure of Bosnian integration into Europe will allow the center to hold. As Bennett makes clear in this tough-minded book, the Dayton settlement ended the violence but dealt more with its symptoms than its underlying causes, which still linger. The problem is that Bosnian elites—Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks alike—continue to pursue the same narrow ethnonationalist agendas that sparked the war rather than encouraging the pursuit of larger national goals. Moving past this zero-sum stalemate will require what Bennett calls a new "logic of Bosnian politics," and he lays out steps for achieving it.

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*Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus*  
 BY GERARD TOAL. Oxford University Press, 2017, 408 pp.

Toal argues that developments such as the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the Russian-fueled violence in eastern Ukraine are too often seen through a reductive Manichaeian lens. In reality, they grow out of an intricate knot of contested narratives and a web of strategic calculations shaped by emotional and moral impulses. Complicating things further is the fact that these are not two-way duels between major powers but complex interactions influenced by the actions of third parties. As Toal reveals in his detailed account of the events in Georgia and his somewhat less probing retelling of the story in Ukraine, the conflicts have unfolded in the twisted wreckage of an imploded Russian empire, unleashing new ambitions and fears and producing new and more complicated relationships. His analysis is not likely to affect how a reader assigns blame for the outcomes in the two cases, but it will enrich the reader's understanding of them.

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## Middle East

*John Waterbury*

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*America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State*

BY OSAMAH F. KHALIL. Harvard University Press, 2016, 440 pp.

This is the work of a young but mature historian: thoroughly documented, carefully argued, and well crafted. In a detailed look at the nexus of American academic expertise on the Middle East and Washington's diplomatic and intelligence power centers, from the Wilson era through the Obama presidency, Khalil keeps his prose crisp and his judgments sober. The supply of area experts fluent in local languages and familiar with the region's populations has never naturally met the demand from the public and private sectors, so the U.S. government has either directly funded area studies or encouraged private foundations to do so. Such interventions began during World War II, and the fight against the Nazis was so compelling that few objected when academics served in the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, which later morphed into the CIA. But as the disaster of the Vietnam War unfolded, area experts warned against academic complicity with U.S. imperialism. It is not clear if the challenge posed by violent jihadism has overcome such concerns, but it has certainly given rise to a new cottage industry in terrorism and counter-insurgency studies.



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*The Egyptians: A Radical History of Egypt's Unfinished Revolution*

BY JACK SHENKER. New Press, 2016, 560 pp.

This is not remotely a history, but it is a lively account full of vignettes that capture a good deal of contemporary Egypt. Shenker, a former correspondent for *The Guardian*, sees the country as locked in a struggle between neoliberal reforms and the revolutionary impulses of ordinary people ground down by international capitalism and its agents in the deep state. He issues quite a few Olympian judgments that brook no dissent, as when he declares that “neoliberalism is a political project and its implementation always involves a mass transfer from the poor to the rich.” But Shenker is also an eloquent witness to several of Egypt’s beleaguered communities—peasants, factory workers, bloggers, women, gays—who were momentarily liberated by the uprising of 2011. Only one Islamist, a jovial Salafist, slips into the narrative. Shenker seems to view Islamism as one of the many guises that the oppressed don to face their oppressors. His main message is that the forces of revolution are loose in the land: the movement that toppled Hosni Mubarak was only the opening salvo.

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*A Revolution Undone: Egypt's Road Beyond Revolt*

BY H. A. HELLYER. Oxford University Press, 2017, 320 pp.

This book considers Egypt’s recent uprisings and descent into military rule and concludes with a brief treatment of the regime of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the general who seized power in 2013.

Hellyer writes engagingly, although he spends a bit too much time assessing what he himself got right and wrong as an analyst of these developments and not enough time explaining where he thinks Egypt is now heading. Hellyer believes there was nothing inevitable about Egypt’s evolution since the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. What Hellyer calls “the revolutionary coalition” of Islamists, secular democrats, and “remnants” of the Mubarak regime could have settled on a single candidate in the 2012 presidential election, rather than splitting up, with the Islamists backing Mohamed Morsi, a former leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. Hellyer argues that things might have turned out differently had the Brotherhood not wrongly interpreted Morsi’s narrow election victory as a popular mandate and had Morsi not proved such a ham-fisted leader. Sisi and his allies in the deep state had not originally planned to depose Morsi but ended up doing so in a brutal fashion. If the Sisi regime cannot relieve Egypt’s socioeconomic pressures, the next uprisings will be led by the poor and will likely be violent.

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*The Fall of the Turkish Model: How the Arab Uprisings Brought Down Islamic Liberalism*

BY CIHAN TUGAL. Verso, 2016, 304 pp.

The “Turkish model” of governance promises the merger of Islam with democracy and free markets. It first took shape under Prime Minister Turgut Ozal in the 1980s and then crystallized under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has led Turkey since 2002. In this ambitious book, Tugal compares Turkey’s approach to those of Egypt, Iran,

and Tunisia by examining how neoliberal economic strategies have played out in each place, paying particular attention to how governments have tried to engage devout Muslim constituencies in the neoliberal project. Tugal argues that the Arab uprisings of 2010–11 and the large antidevelopment protests that took place in Istanbul in 2013 demonstrated the failure of those efforts. But Tugal's analysis is disjointed; cause and effect chase each other's tails. He relies on jargon and leaves undefined key concepts, such as "political society," "power bloc," and "passive revolution"—a significant problem, since the book hinges not on new empirical evidence but rather on an analytic framework.

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*Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East*

BY CHRISTOPHER DAVIDSON.  
Oneworld, 2016, 688 pp.

According to Davidson, for more than a century, the intelligence and military establishments of the United Kingdom and the United States have been leading a hidden struggle against implicitly progressive forces in the Middle East, driven by a desire for geopolitical advantage and the control of oil. Notwithstanding the declaration of a "war on terror," Davidson believes that the preferred instruments of the Americans and the British have been Islamist movements: the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban, and, most recently, the Islamic State (also known as ISIS). The Americans and the British have often found themselves fighting their own proxies, but they knew that would happen, Davidson claims. They therefore fight halfheartedly, he contends, so that

such groups continue to survive. Nearly all of Davidson's sources are in the public domain: he uncovers no original evidence for his argument and instead assembles familiar pieces into an unfamiliar shape. The results are unconvincing. For example, if Western powers fostered ISIS in order to drive a Sunni wedge between Iran and Syria, why did they bother to topple Saddam Hussein, who already played that role? More troubling, Davidson's analysis denies agency to Islamists, Middle Easterners, and pretty much everyone else: in his view, we are all merely pawns in the shadow wars.

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*Ike's Gamble: America's Rise to Dominance in the Middle East*

BY MICHAEL DORAN. Free Press,  
2016, 320 pp.

In this richly researched, brisk, and insightful book, Doran argues that during the Suez crisis of 1956, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and his advisers were in the grip of a misleading diplomatic paradigm, operating under a flawed set of assumptions about how international politics worked. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, they believed they could appease the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser by extracting concessions from his British, French, and Israeli adversaries. Instead, U.S. protection only whetted Nasser's geopolitical appetite, and Eisenhower eventually rued his administration's folly. *Ike's Gamble* is broadly persuasive, but it loses traction in places. The author sweepingly characterizes, and sometimes dismisses, the work of other historians but seldom tells readers who they are. Moreover, although Doran deftly exposes Nasser's

cynicism and aggressiveness, he downplays the defensive aspects of the Egyptian leader's position. During the period in question, Egypt endured Israeli sabotage and an invasion launched by British, French, and Israeli forces. Meanwhile, Egypt's ally Syria faced subversive attacks launched by Iraq, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Doran acknowledges most of those realities but, echoing the U.S. policymakers he criticizes, does not permit them to dislodge his own favored paradigm. Still, the book offers a forceful and challenging interpretation of the Suez crisis that no student of Middle Eastern history can afford to ignore.

SALIM YAQUB

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## Asia and Pacific

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*Andrew J. Nathan*

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*How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*

BY YUEN YUEN ANG. Cornell University Press, 2016, 344 pp.

*Centrifugal Empire: Central-Local Relations in China*

BY JAE HO CHUNG. Columbia University Press, 2016, 232 pp.

*Unlikely Partners: Chinese Reformers, Western Economists, and the Making of Global China*

BY JULIAN GEWIRTZ. Harvard University Press, 2017, 416 pp.

**A**re there lessons in the Chinese miracle for other countries that want to surge from deep poverty to advanced development in a matter of

decades? Surveying the experience of three Chinese counties, Ang cuts through the usual debate about whether good governance or economic growth should come first, seeing a more cyclical process at work. First, authorities allowed markets to emerge even though they were hampered by corruption, weak property rights, and underregulation. Market activity then generated problems that required officials to build stronger institutions, which in turn fostered the further development of markets.

Given China's vastness, this process could unfold only because local officials were incentivized to innovate constantly, no matter the risk—a process Ang labels “franchised decentralization.” Chung's book is the most complete account available of China's unique combination of centralized policymaking and delegated implementation, a setup that emerged after years of experimentation by reform-era leaders seeking to overcome the flaws of Mao's hypercentralized system. Today, China has four levels of administration below the central government, allowing wide discretion in implementing economic policy but imposing tight control over other issues, such as population planning.

Ang and Chung focus on the local level; Gewirtz provides a dramatic and freshly detailed account of the terrifying years from 1976 to 1993, when China's central leaders held their breath and pushed their country into the unknown by beginning to liberalize its economy. He focuses especially on the boldness of Zhao Ziyang, who served as premier from 1980 to 1987. Zhao sought advice from foreign economists, putting their ideas into practice despite opposition from a conservative faction that was understandably suspicious of Western admonitions

to abandon state planning and compromise the country's economic autonomy. This is a story not of Western influence seeping irresistibly into Chinese minds but of Chinese leaders actively reaching out for ideas. It is also a story of fierce political struggles conducted in the form of theoretical debates. Although built around personalities, it delivers a great deal of insight into how China's mix of socialism and capitalism works.

Together, these three books show that China's transformation cannot be attributed to a single cause; rather, it arose from a contingent, interactive process—Ang calls it “directed improvisation.” She formalizes this insight by using a novel analytic method that she terms “coevolutionary narrative,” which has the potential to influence future studies of institutional and economic change beyond China. The Chinese system has proved to be remarkably agile, but creative adaptation is not an easy lesson for others—or even present-day China—to apply. The process can become bogged down, which might be happening in China today, as President Xi Jinping presses the country's bureaucrats to carry out even riskier reforms.

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*Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan: From Pork to Foreign Policy*  
BY AMY CATALINAC. Cambridge University Press, 2016, 268 pp.

Before 1994, Japan elected the lower house of its parliament using an unusual “multimember district” system that forced candidates from each party to run not only against the other party but also against one another. As a result, candidates tended to build ties with relatively

small, safe pools of voters, delivering them a stream of targeted building projects, subsidies, and other help that Catalinac terms “pork.” In 1994, the electoral system was changed to one that combined single-member districts and proportional representation, forcing candidates to broaden their appeal to larger constituencies. Ever since, scholars have debated the policy impact. Catalinac uses an innovative computerized analysis of candidates' election manifestoes to show that after the reform they paid more attention to national security issues than before, and she argues that this helps explain the government's moves toward a more assertive security policy. She responds resourcefully to possible objections, among them that the manifestoes don't matter much in Japanese election campaigns and that security policy more likely shifted because of changes in the threat environment. Her contribution will not end the debate, but it offers an interesting new twist.

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*Dealing With an Ambiguous World*  
BY BILAHARI KAUSIKAN. World Scientific, 2016, 176 pp.

*Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy*  
BY SHIVSHANKAR MENON. Brookings Institution Press, 2016, 176 pp.

Realism is a worldview forced by circumstance on tiny Singapore, and few articulate it better than Kausikan, who in 2013 retired as the top civil servant in the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The lectures collected in his book brim with insights. “The small countries of Southeast Asia have



lived in the midst of competition by larger powers for many centuries,” he points out; “to balance, hedge, and bandwagon is embedded in our foreign policy DNA.” Washington and Beijing will find a way to get along since the United States cannot contain China and China cannot expel the United States from Asia. But he warns the region’s smaller countries that “when major powers strike a deal, they generally try to make lesser beings pay the price.” An equal opportunity critic, he calls into question the alleged universality of Western values while also admonishing China that a great power “cannot forever portray itself as a victim without calling its intentions into question.” And to endear himself to academics, he states, “Any resemblance between what I studied and what I did for a living is almost coincidental.”

Menon is a realist from a large country. He has served India in ambassadorial posts and as foreign secretary and national security adviser and tells the inside stories of developments in which he played a key role, such as the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement with China and the 2005 nuclear agreement with the United States, along with India’s responses to Pakistani-sponsored terrorist attacks, its failed military and diplomatic interventions in the Sri Lankan civil war, and its adoption of a “no first use” nuclear policy. Although India’s policy process is not known for its agility, Menon makes a good case that the government can pull off bold initiatives by adopting a “fundamentally realistic approach masked by normative rhetoric.” This is partly because foreign policy in a democracy requires negotiating with forces inside

the country as much as with those outside it. Although deterring Pakistan remains a necessity, Menon argues that India has shifted its foreign policy focus to the rivalry with China, which is one reason India has developed a “natural partnership” with the United States. Menon counsels that in its dealings with China, India should seek common benefits where possible and “where there is a hindrance, . . . prevent it, eliminate it, work around it, divert it.”

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*Subversive Lives: A Family Memoir of the Marcos Years*

BY SUSAN F. QUIMPO AND  
NATHAN GILBERT QUIMPO. Ohio  
University Press, 2016, 512 pp.

A militant leftist movement has existed in various forms in the Philippines since the early twentieth century. It burgeoned from the 1960s through the 1980s as students and young professionals reacted to Ferdinand Marcos’ repressive rule and his 1972 imposition of martial law. Seven of the ten Quimpo siblings were among those who joined the Maoism-influenced Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). All who survive have contributed chapters to this collective memoir, which manages to present a coherent story despite the multitude of voices. The family saga began when the older siblings demonstrated against the Vietnam War as high school students, to the horror of their cautious, hard-working parents. Step by step, the children deepened their involvement, until most were living on the run, trying to spark an armed revolution. The male siblings suffered imprisonment, torture, and exile. With the end of the Marcos dictatorship and the breakup of the CPP,

the surviving siblings returned to their middle-class roots as teachers and government officials, although they remain outraged by the injustices in Philippine society. At once political and personal, this is a valuable source on a lesser-known chapter of Philippine history.

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## Africa

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### *Nicolas van de Walle*

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*The Mayor of Mogadishu: A Story of Chaos and Redemption in the Ruins of Somalia*

BY ANDREW HARDING. St. Martin's Press, 2016, 304 pp.

With the end of the Islamist militia al Shabab's control of Mogadishu in 2011, the establishment of a new federal constitution in 2012, and the significant decline in political violence since then, Somalia seems as close as it ever has been to escaping the bloodshed and chaos that have plagued it for so long. Harding's stunning book relates the country's recent history through the perspective of one man. The result is great storytelling by a master reporter. Mohamud "Tarzan" Nur was born into rural poverty before Somalia won its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. He was brought up in a bleak orphanage in Mogadishu and spent his childhood as a street urchin respected for his fighting skills. But he grew up to become a civil engineer and successful businessman, first in Saudi Arabia and later in London. In 2010, he returned to Somalia after the country's

transitional government appointed him mayor of Mogadishu. At its strongest, Harding's portrait of him resembles a Somali version of Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*; the passages evoking 1960s street life in Mogadishu alone make the book worth reading. Harding never whitewashes Nur's faults, giving voice to some of his detractors and pointing to a few shady episodes that have dogged him. But Harding renders Nur as a symbol of the optimism and resilience that Somalis have demonstrated even in the face of their country's collapse. By the end of the book, most readers will find themselves rooting for Nur, Mogadishu, and Somalia.

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*Beyond Ethnic Politics in Africa*

BY DOMINIKA KOTER. Cambridge University Press, 2016, 220 pp.

The ethnic violence that has marred recent elections in African countries, such as Kenya and Nigeria, has reinforced the notion that African politics is structured by stringent ethnic logics. In fact, as Koter shows in her fine book, the political salience of ethnicity varies enormously within and across African countries. Even in countries with easily identifiable ethnic groups, politicians and political parties don't necessarily rely on such cleavages. Based on a careful comparison of Benin and Senegal (and buttressed with examples from Botswana, Guinea, Kenya, and Mali), Koter's research reveals that African leaders play the ethnic card on the national level only when they can't rely on strong traditional or religious leaders at the local level to mobilize voters on their behalf or when they lack the organizational capacity and resources

to make broader appeals based on promises to deliver services and create economic opportunity. Koter's model of careful scholarship is representative of a wider trend toward high-quality research on the evolution of African electoral politics.

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*Guinea-Bissau: Micro-State to "Narco-State"*

EDITED BY PATRICK CHABAL AND TOBY GREEN. Hurst, 2016, 288 pp.

It is no surprise that Guinea-Bissau, with a population of less than two million and a GDP of just \$7.5 billion, receives little attention from scholars. This excellent collection of essays on the West African country's complicated politics is the first comprehensive English-language study of the topic to appear in more than a decade. Guinea-Bissau has weathered an unstable democracy since 1994, when it held its first multiparty elections. A brief civil war broke out in 1998–99; since then, there have been a number of military coups. Taken together, the essays collected here do a better job of describing the country's political environment than of explaining the persistence of its toxic mixture of extreme poverty, weak state capacity, and rapacious elites. But a number of them usefully examine Guinea-Bissau's transformation into a "narco-state," the result of collusion between authorities and Latin American drug cartels, which has turned the country into a significant

way station along the routes of the international drug trade.

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*Humor, Silence, and Civil Society in Nigeria*

BY EBENEZER OBADARE. University of Rochester Press, 2016, 188 pp.

Dissatisfied with the increasing tendency of scholars to reduce the meaning of "civil society" to the activities of nongovernmental organizations, Obadare argues that the everyday discourse of Nigerians produces the kind of political effects—including resistance to the state's authority and demands for accountability—that political scientists usually ascribe only to more institutional forms of civil society. Obadare contributes to the debate about what counts as civil society by making a compelling case that "associating is not undertaken by associations alone": it also results from ordinary social life. His book is at its best when it brings his argument to life by cataloging and analyzing the witty stories, jokes, and wordplay that Nigerians employ to mock powerful politicians and government institutions. Public discourse undoubtedly shapes Nigerians' attitudes toward their government, but it's unclear whether it truly promotes state responsiveness, as Obadare maintains, or whether it mostly just palliates mass discontent. 🌐

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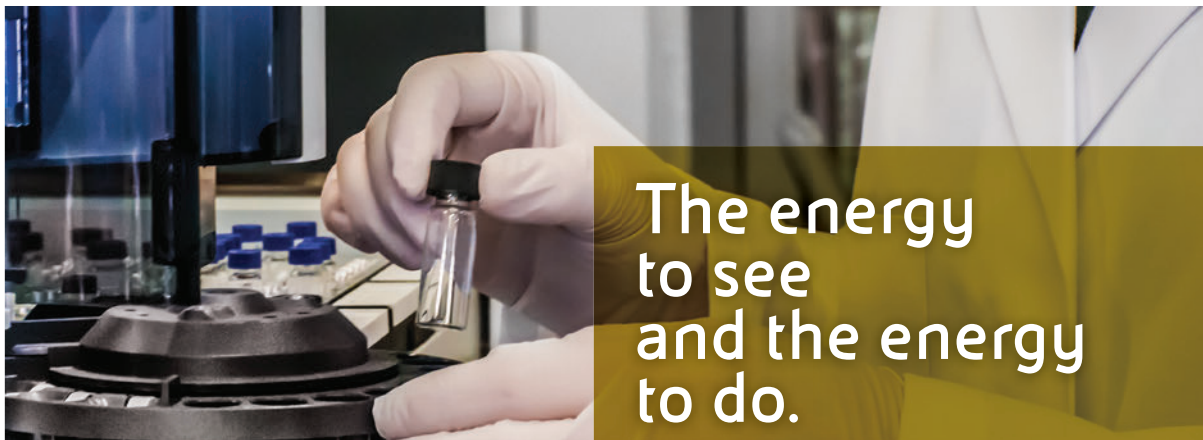
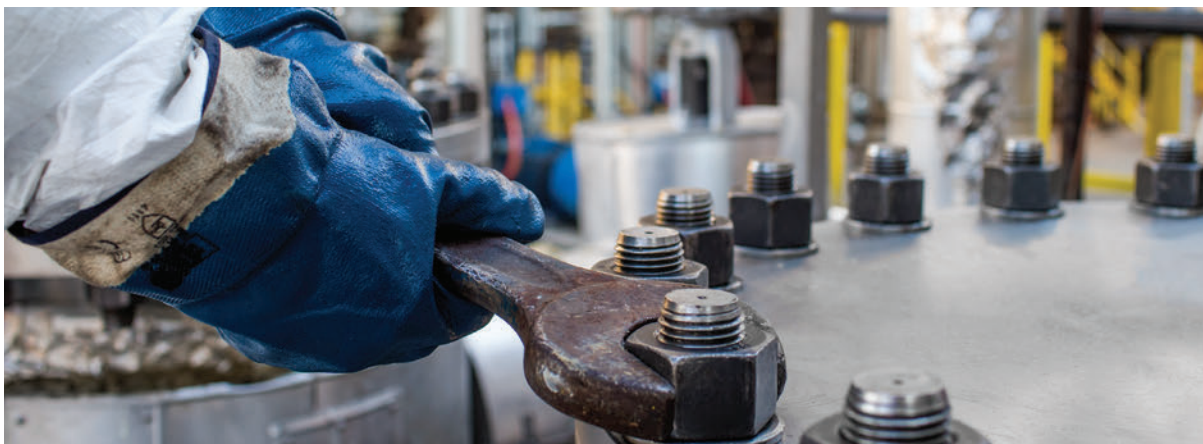
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